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The People's Pound

The image of the 'bankers' ramp' has always been a potent one in Labour mythology, and often with good reason. On more than one occasion the instincts of the movement have proved sounder than the calculations of the financial wise-acres. The present febrile condition of sterling, which according to the Chancellor might have struck us out of a clear sky, may be just such an occasion. Coming as it does on top of the discovery that our 'cuts' in public expenditure will not meet the repayment of existing international debts, the latest jolt to confidence on the money markets gives some cause for concern about whose hand is actually on the tiller.

It is all reminiscent of nothing so much as the siren song of Mr Anthony Barber, who affected to believe that a floating pound would be a stable one in the long run, and who ended up by banking the inflationary fires as never before. Mr Healey, who has variously bullied and wheedled the trade unions into accepting a £6 limit on the basis of single-figure inflation, has now been compelled to add three new percentage points of tolerance almost overnight. While, on the same day as the sharpest fall against the dollar, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development pronounces the £6 ceiling to be too lenient and prescribes a drop in the value of sterling as an incentive to exports. Material, surely, even for the least paranoid union leader.

Although the crisis seems to have been triggered by an attack of nerves in Threadneedle Street, promptly translated by the market into a speculative dumping exercise, the consequence has been even more ironic than the cause. We now have almost all the adverse effects of an import control strategy with practically none of the benefits. The results are already being felt in the commodity markets, and wholesale costs and retail prices will not be far behind. Common Market food policy has also chosen this moment to levy a toll on our domestic budget, so the pressure on cost-of-living negotiations is twice reinforced. In these circumstances for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to talk about the 'containment' of inflation, as if butter had not already melted in his mouth, is hypocrisy of a high order.

Ironic, too, is the fact that exactly 200 years after Adam Smith published his *Wealth of Nations* the European powers should be so frantically put out by Britain's panic measures. Not so sure as they publicly pretend that the next boom really *is* on the way, finance ministers and mandarins are reverting to the old jealousies and alliances of the Thirties and making sallies at each other's export markets. It is almost as if they actually believe the events of the last week formed part of a currency gambit by perfidious Albion. Again, the outrage could hardly be worse than the one predicted if we had opted for import controls instead of import penalisation by stealth. As it is, we are left with the angry thrashings of a broken-backed 'snake', and the Bank of England attempting hamfistedly to attach sterling to the dismal lira end of it.

For decades in the past the fetish of fixed currency exchange rates put the British economy in an absurdly over-exposed position. The cost of the fetish told especially hard on Labour governments with ambitious or expensive programmes of domestic reform. There should be no mourning the fact that this epoch is behind us, and the news that Nigeria has seen fit to sell off her sterling balances is as good a valediction as any. But the slightly crooked 'float' which has replaced the old system is every bit as fraught with inflationary danger. It shows more clearly than any other form of bargaining how ruthless and competitive the allegedly fraternal European system has become. And it has imported tomorrow's price rises through the back door. Often under previous Labour Administrations the really bad news came all of a sudden and from the international money markets. This time it looks as though a half-cock attempt to put an edge on the exchange rate has led to a sudden and massive Nemesis – leaving the pound's value unimproved and giving Britain a beating on commodity prices. Mr Healey must now face the patient and dogged trade unions with the news that he gave away with one hand what he took from them with the other.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Friends and Enemies of Mr Thorpe

The fact that a story is highly unlikely does not make it untrue. All kinds of things are unlikely. In textual criticism, there is I believe a saying, *lectio difficilior potior* – the more difficult reading has the stronger claim. Certainly, Mr Jeremy Thorpe's friends tend to plump for the *lectio difficilior*, in their explanations of the Scott affair. First there was Mr Peter Bessell, uncertain as to which of two stories to choose, but finally plumping for one which, while it seemed unlikely to those who had known him, did at least go unchallenged in public. Then there was Mr David Holmes, Mr Thorpe's best man, who was prepared to pay £2,500 to protect the reputation of Mr Bessell, even though Mr Bessell was no longer standing for Parliament. He did so because he feared that if Mr Bessell were involved in scandal some of this might rub off on the Liberal Party candidate who succeeded to Mr Bessell's constituency. And yet he also knew that the Scott allegations were well-known in the area. Mr Holmes reckons he made a fool of himself when purchasing the documents, and because of this he never told Mr Thorpe about the matter. Not even when the payment had itself become a major cause of public scandal.

The *lectio difficilior*, as I said, has its place in textual criticism. In the world of politics, however, it's a bloody menace. The past week has seen the Liberal Party thrown into utter confusion. Mr Thorpe blames the press, Mr Harold Wilson blames the South Africans, Mr Cyril Smith makes dark hints and Mr Smith's mother, indulging a taste for the dramatic while trying to protect her son from Mr Thorpe's midnight phone calls, says:

> They have let him [Cyril] down. I can say a lot – but I won't. There is a lot more to come out but I don't want to upset Cyril. We have all heard episode one about Mr Thorpe's troubles. Episode two will soon follow.

This is politics of a very singular kind. It was always known that Mr Smith wanted to oust Mr Thorpe. On Friday he made his bid public by calling for yet another meeting of the 13 MPs, to decide whether they should 'get rid of him now' or let him stay on till after the next general election. Mr Thorpe, in a cunning move, trumped this bid by announcing that he would stand for re-election in the autumn under the new procedure. At this point Mr Smith shows what he's made of (a question which has always intrigued me) and just how much he cares about the present by-election results: he announces that he is thinking of resigning, then he allows Mr Thorpe to put out a late-night denial, then he makes a fool of his leader by reiterating his threat the next morning.

I am told that Mr Smith learned these tactics from the Labour Party. They are certainly less than gentlemanly – throwing down your cards and bursting into petulant tears because you've lost a trick. They have a peculiar advantage, however, which is to distract public attention from what has been a personal failure on the part of Mr Smith. Not long ago he was announcing the major effort that the Liberals were going to make in the by-elections, and indeed he himself did make that effort. But he failed to drain the Palace of Westminster of its Liberals, as promised, and it was his own mistaken reading of the situation in Coventry that made the lost deposit there seem such a defeat.

In the past couple of weeks I have made two trips with the Liberals, and the contrast between them was striking. The coach to Coventry was a jolly affair, decked out with orange posters reading 'This is the Liberal Band Waggon – Jump On'. There were Twiglets, Crispy Bacon Crunchies and Mintoes handed out by Mrs Margaret Wingfield, who was obviously over-excited, and who told us to wave and smile at the coaches we passed on the motorway. The Young Liberals sang left-wing songs, and a version of 'Oh Sir Jasper', which went:

> Oh Peter Bessell do not touch her
> (repeated three times)
> As she lay between the lilywhite sheets
> with nothing on at all.

We met the ludicrous Mr Alan Leighton, who seemed to fit into the mood of frivolity, and we were roused, over a pie-and-peas supper, by Mr Smith, who told us that the Conservatives were out of the running and that this was a straight fight between Labour and Liberal.

The second occasion was distinctly more drab – the posters had gone, there were no Twiglets, Crispy Bacon Crunchies, Mintoes, rude songs, mad wavings and smilings. There was no frivolity. The Liberal party had called out its earnest young men to canvass, and they wore an air of grim determination. When Mr Thorpe arrived in Carshalton, he made a few brief, angry remarks to the press, and then set off knocking on the doors. Considering the number of journalists dogging his footsteps, and considering how late he had been the night before, trying to squash the *Daily Mail* story about Mr Smith, and considering all the kerfuffle in the Commons that afternoon (with Mr Wilson, unable to be left out of all the fun, making his brilliant diversionary tactic), and considering that Mr Thorpe had yet to meet Mr Richard Wainwright for a discussion about his (Mr Thorpe's) future, I'd say he did very well.

The strain was showing when he faced the press, but in the living-rooms of Carshalton, chatting briskly about the central heating, he knew exactly the right tone to hit. And in between calls, he had brisk advice for the party workers: 'Lesson number one – shut the door. Reason? Dog gets out – killed – finished. Right now, where's the next one? Hello Mrs Smith, Stephanie, Mr Smith, just a brief word, Jeremy Thorpe . . .'

My evening ended outside Mr Thorpe's beautiful house in Orme Square, waiting for Mr Wainwright to tell us what he had had to say (but I'm afraid he must have escaped over the roofs) and rather wondering what could happen next, to make the situation more bizarre. Mr Thorpe clearly has the bit between his teeth, and will not go without a struggle. The loyalty of Mr David Steel is nothing more than the loyalty of silence. Mr Jo Grimond, feline and mischievous as ever, is about as much use as a hole in the head. Mr Wainwright, by announcing his intentions well in advance, has dealt a gratuitous blow against the leadership. (Mr Wainwright has been mentioned as a possible successor. He won't succeed, in my view, because he looks like a pixie, but he may well do more damage yet.) As for Mr Smith, the best you can say is that he is unequal to his job.

And Mr John Pardoe? The problem here is that Mr Pardoe cannot avoid the limelight. He cannot say he's not a candidate, and so he is bound to seem disloyal and thrusting, whatever he does. But Mr Pardoe may have peaked too soon. He is certainly afraid of a Stop Pardoe movement, and foresaw this danger some time ago. He relies on the support of Mr Smith, but he must now be wondering whether that support is not more of a liability than an asset. One advantage for Mr Pardoe is that, when an organisation is in a shambles and there is a distinct nervousness about its future, a candidate acquires merit by simply showing that he wants the job, and wants it very badly. Whatever Mr Steel now says, he gave the impression to his colleagues that he was thinking of leaving the race altogether, and going to the Race Relations Commission. That was a mistake. In addition, Mr Steel is going to be in an awkward position if Mr Thorpe does contest the election, since he has to give up his loyalty, which would otherwise have been his best asset.

It may well be, however, that before anything comes to the vote the whole Liberal Party will have been smothered under a mass of recriminations. This is not the time to place your bets.

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Peter Jenkins

Wilson Comes of Age

Sixty is a young age at which to become an elder statesman. Yet Harold Wilson's public career extends over the entire post-war period, and since becoming leader of his party in 1963 he has been the dominant figure in British public life. He has seen most of them off, his rivals at home and his opposites abroad. De Gaulle, Pompidou, Brandt, Johnson and Nixon are dead or fallen. Gaitskell and Bevan died to make way for him. There is no potential rival in the Labour Party who is significantly younger than him. He is king without heir, apparent or presumptive. Against his opponents on the other side of the House he towers in seniority and experience although still younger than Harold Macmillan on first becoming Prime Minister. Edward Heath, a few months his junior, rose and fell within Harold Wilson's successive ministries. The mandarins whom he held somewhat in awe in 1964 have departed to make way for the high-flying young principals from his days as President of the Board of Trade. By joining Attlee's cabinet at 31, having never sat upon the back benches, he stole a generational march on his contemporaries. The elder statesman role he has taken upon himself is another act of precocity.

Is statesmanship the latest of his Walter Mitty fantasies? Or has there been truly a reformation of the Prime Minister? In politics role-playing and purpose are not easily untwined. His view of himself, or the one which he offers to the public, has certainly undergone a change. By caricature he is the politicians' politicker, the high-wire walker and great escape artist, a ten-day man, superb tactician but no strategist, devoid, some say, of purpose and of principle. His view of himself, of course, was always more favourable but sometimes he would caricature himself, rejoicing boastfully in his own cunning, engaging – as in his memoirs – in fanciful flights of self-vindication. So consider, then, these recent versions of himself:

'I am a long-term strategist. I am a strategist who gets my tactics wrong many times but I don't usually get my strategy wrong.'

'I am quite content to lose a battle as long as we then go on to win what is vital, and very often when a battle looks like being lost I am planning how the next one is going to be won.'

So now he is Fabius 'Cunctator', of whom Plutarch noted 'his dilatory way gave occasion in his own camp for suspicion of want of courage; and this opinion prevailed yet more in Hannibal's army'. Fabius's reply to his critics was: 'It is no inglorious thing to have fear for the safety of our country, but to be turned from one's course by men's opinions, by blame, and by misrepresentation, shows a man unfit to hold an office such as this, which, by such conduct, he makes the slave of those whose errors it is his business to control.'

From 4 March 1974 until the completion of the referendum on 5 June 1975 inflation raged unfettered and the country appeared to lack firm leadership. In July of 1975 the Government and the trade union movement came to terms and together they came to terms with inflation. Not long after, Wilson told *Time* magazine:

> Any fool can have confrontation. You can press at the wrong time and get the wrong answer, or you can work on people. You have got to have a sense of timing. You can't learn it, you can't read books about it, you can't lecture on it. You've got to have instinctive timing, which sometimes I've got right and sometimes I've got wrong. If I'd tried to force the pace beyond what a

The Young Self: 'But wasn't it you who was going to build the new Britain?'

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democratic trade union movement was prepared to stand, I could have got a dramatic situation, and it's not always dramas one seeks.

Post hoc rationalisations are no more than that. Nevertheless, there is a view of politics contained in these statements, and – as we shall see – in the Prime Minister's changed style of government, which is relevant more for the future than for the inglorious recent past.

We may be sure that historians will write about the 'Wilson era', and that places him in the most select of company. Peel began an era, Disraeli and Gladstone shared one, Baldwin not only dominated public life for most of the period between the wars but more than any other embodied the spirit of his times. The era of Harold Wilson has been one of national decline. He has lived near the centre of it since 1945. In 1964 he believed that he could arrest and reverse it. Instead he presided over its acceleration. Under mostly Wilsonian management the British economy has gone from near top to bottom of the major league.

Measure of Decline

In 1960* Britain's gross domestic product was 93 per cent of West Germany's, 112 per cent of France's, and 156 per cent of Japan's. By 1970 it was 72 per cent of Japan's, 76 per cent of Germany's, and 85 per cent of France's. These figures are in constant 1963 prices and exchange rates. At current prices and exchange rates the British economy was still roughly on a par with Germany in 1960, was 60 per cent its size by 1972 and – according to the projections of the Hudson Institute – will be half its size in 1980. In per capita terms, the best rough guide to the wealth of nations, the British were just ahead of the Germans still in 1960; today we are below all our neighbours save Italy.

The meaning of such statistics, which measure only relative decline, can be disputed. During most of the Wilson era the British people have gone on growing just a little richer in real terms. Economic historians trace the slow growth performance of the British economy back 100 years or more. Only the few people who read tables of international comparison or see with their own eyes the higher standards of living in, say, Hamburg, are directly aware of the nation's failure compared with others. The failure to satisfy indigenous expectations is another matter and by no means unique to Britain. Nonetheless, as a country we have done badly, and gradually the realisation of this has become a factor in British politics, increasingly since the events of 1974.

Such a decline begins to have meaning in people's daily lives as a dwindling and growingly inefficient manufacturing base becomes progressively unable to support an accustomed style of life. In spite of rising public expenditure (and rising taxes), hospital waiting lists and bus queues grow, the housing stock deteriorates, and so on. The British are in danger, as one American onlooker cruelly put it, of being 'the first nation in modern history to go from developed to under-developed'.

Decline began to produce the politics of decline. The expectations which in conditions of expansion hold a society together began, from some time in the late Sixties, to tear it apart. Decline, and its prospect, strains the patience which is an essential characteristic of a well-functioning democracy. The interests of impatient groups begin to override a sense of national interest and to challenge the legitimacy of representative institutions. By the time Harold Wilson returned to power in March 1974 the governability of Britain was in doubt.

This was his inheritance, from the débâcle of that February, but it was also in part his legacy returned now to him. His own defeat at the hands of the unions in June 1969 had helped to set in train a virulent wage inflation. In Opposition, Labour contributed to a swelling politics of envy. The tide within the party flowed in the direction of class warfare and isolationism. As lawlessness became a problem Labour endorsed lawlessness at Clay Cross. Harold Wilson presided unhappily but helplessly over an irresponsible Opposition.

He has never had much use for the 'prophets of doom' whom he denounces from time to time but we can take it that by March 1974 he recognised the country to be in a pretty fair mess. We may guess that already by then the reforming and expansionist zeal which he had brought to his new office a decade previously in 1964 had been much dampened. Then he had believed – the conviction rings through his speeches of that inspiring campaign – that through a release of national energy, set in motion by the motor of a powerful prime ministry, he would be able to 'get Britain moving' and build his 'New Britain'.

Last Radical Fling

By the end of the 1964-70 government he must have felt that he had tried almost everything. The attempt, from late 1968, to reform industrial relations was, perhaps, his last radical fling. The defeat he suffered was chastening and instructive. 'In Place of Strife' contained a bold programme of reform relevant not only to the perpetual task of 'putting the economy right' but also to the capacity of Labour to serve the nation as a party of government. The previous essays in incomes policy had placed a strain upon the traditional division of the Labour movement (whereby collective bargaining was the preserve of its industrial wing) but 'In Place of Strife' was concerned not with the proceeds of collective bargaining but with the procedures of trade unionism. It presented a fundamental challenge to the sovereignty of trade unions at the workplace – or so they believed. Their vested interests proved too strong for him. It was a turning point in British politics. It was a turning point, we may now guess, in the Wilson era. The first problem now was not to build the New Britain but to hold together the old one.

The first task, however, after the stunning defeat of 1970, was to hold together his party and, indeed, himself as its leader. By the sharpest electoral swing since 1945 a Labour majority of 96 became a Conservative majority of 30. The defeat did something untold to his ego. His post-electoral depression did not quickly lift, some say not until fate (or the luck of the devil) had rehoused him once more at Number 10.

His state of mind, the morbid belief that he had let his party down, and his fear for his position as leader are part of the explanation of his unheroic leadership of the Opposition between 1970 and 1974. We know from his deeds in office, and sometimes from his words, that he can have had little honest use for many of the policies put forward by his party and contained, only a little diluted, in the manifesto of which he now plays the custodian. His first U-turn on the Common Market in 1971 (when he rejected terms not very different from those he would have accepted had he remained in office) was in part to do with his conviction that James Callaghan would use the Europe issue to wrest away his leadership. His second U-turn was on the referendum. By this time he was deep into the politics of 'give way, give way, and give way again in order to save the party we love'.

Sleight of Hand

However, the charge – popular at this time and since – that Harold Wilson 'puts party before the country' does not stick in that simple form. What his career shows is that he is the educator of his party when in office, its appeaser when in Opposition. From office he has not only sought to educate it but when necessary has not been afraid to confront it. It was no appeaser who told an interviewer in 1968: 'There is one question you didn't ask so I'll ask it myself for you. "What was the hardest thing I had to do in a hard year?" Without doubt it was to tell my own supporters they had got to do things totally opposed to them and everything they had been brought up to believe. But if you can't do that when it is necessary you will not only never come through. You don't deserve to.'

Sometimes, of course, he acts by sleight of hand. What successful party leader hasn't? He is on record in his admiration of Macmillan: '. . . the man's a genius. He's holding up the banner of Suez for the party to follow, and he's leading the party away from Suez. That's what I'd like to do with the Labour Party over nationalisation.' That's exactly what he did do with Tony Benn's industrial policy and his National Enterprise Board; he led them up the garden, manifesto in hand. But in Opposition, when the fissural tendencies of his party are unchecked by the spoils and disciplines of office, he has always adopted the other course. His difference with Gaitskell was not about banning the bomb but splitting the party. He was against it. It was exactly the same with the Common Market after 1970.

In power his consistent ambition has been to educate his party as a party of government. At Blackpool last year he announced that it had graduated. His is not the first party leader to equate party government with national government. Indeed his is the classical position. In a two-party system of government it is the natural ambition of

*The figures do not exactly correspond to Labour's terms of office but that does not matter; their purpose is not to indict Wilson personally but to give some measure of the relative decline experienced over a period in which he was for the most part presiding.

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each to become the national party. It is an ambition sorely deficient in the Labour Party below the gangway and in many of the constituencies.

Last year he told the miners' conference – the miners who had brought Heath down and made moot the governability of the country through democratic institutions: 'The issue now is not whether this or any other democratic socialist government can survive and lead the nation to full employment and a greater measure of social justice. It is whether any government so constituted and dedicated to the principles of consent and consensus within our democracy can lead this nation.'

Wilson does put party before country in the sense that it is the horse before the cart. Party is the means of governing country. In Opposition the end justifies the means. In office the Labour movement may not be the whole nation but it is a large sample of it, containing most of the essential elements; the end then becomes conditional upon the means, upon 'the principles of consent and consensus within our democracy' and within the Labour movement as the heart of that democracy.

Sitting on the Fence

The Prime Minister was not reformed at a stroke. For his first 16 months back in office he continued to lead his party as if still in Opposition. Not until the referendum was over, and the inner-party battle settled, could he begin truly to govern again. Meanwhile inflation raged and nothing was done. Confidence ebbed from the system, at home and abroad. What were his intentions as to Europe? Mr Enoch Powell has suggested this is the wrong question. 'He was grievously misunderstood over the Common Market. Those who argued whether the Prime Minister was pro-European or an anti-European were both wide of the mark. He was – and is – neither.' That may be true but it begs one important question. The referendum was to provide him with his mandate to govern, a mandate insufficiently afforded by the narrow pluralities of February and October 1974. Which verdict would provide the firmer mandate – the 'yes' or the 'no'? Perhaps in terms of the obtaining of wage restraint from the trade unions it would have made no great difference, but in preventing the slide to siege economy, in reasserting the authority of Parliament and government and, by these means, sustaining democracy and liberty through a period of national crisis, there cannot be much doubt as to the answer.

However, during this period of Opposition prolonged into office – sitting on the fence still with his options hanging out – the Prime Minister gradually regained his confidence. Perhaps by now he could begin to see the strategic possibilities of his own opportunistic tactics. We can only imagine his state of mind on having found himself Prime Minister once more. But we can imagine that he was hardly able to believe his luck. During the February campaign he was never his old confident self. He looked unwell and perhaps was. It seems he expected to lose. He cannot have been happy with the state in which his party joined the fight. During the campaign his aides had difficulty in raising his spirits even when the news was good. The result and its consolidation in October – again by no means certain – must have seemed like a deliverance from the Almighty himself. We may wonder if he did not at some moment give thanks and swear solemnly to himself or whoever to be worthy of that rarest of heaven's gifts – a second chance.

The most striking difference between the Wilson since the referendum and the Wilson of the Sixties is that he has abandoned 'prime ministerial government'. According to the theorists of the time (John Mackintosh, popularised by Richard Crossman) prime ministerial government was superseding cabinet government. Prime ministerial government had presidential overtones. In 1964 Wilson became a conscious exponent of the theory and an imitator of John F. Kennedy. The power of the Prime Minister was to be the chief agent for modernising Britain. It was a role to some extent forced upon him by the inexperience of his colleagues but it was also to his relish. When not running the show, he was stealing it. A great deal of the inner history of his government from 1966 to 1970 concerned attempts – none wholly successful – to collectivise the Prime Minister, to restrain him within some form of 'inner cabinet', to impose some strategic direction on his personal style of government.

Today the situation within the Government is transformed. The cabinet actually speaks well of the Prime Minister. Even those colleagues who would not count themselves among his greatest admirers on other grounds concede that these days he plays it straight. He interferes little with his senior colleagues and backs them up in private and in public. There has been a reversion to a more conventional mode of cabinet government, far more so than under Heath. The Prime Minister is once more *primus inter pares.*

A New Dignity

He delegates. He settles disputes. He is accessible as a court of appeal to his junior ministers. He expounds to the country the collective policy of his government. Whereas in the past he was inclined to manipulate the party or the press in the aid of his battles within the Government now he uses his cabinet. Benn was contained by the device of referring all his decisions to cabinet; Barbara Castle is under similar supervision concerning the consultants and the pay-beds. Public intervention by the Prime Minister is now his weapon of last resort. His most effective weapon is his chairmanship, not only of full cabinet but also of its committees on key issues – for examples, industrial policy and devolution. The marks of his new prime ministership are dignity and self-discipline. Seldom does he seek to steal the limelight or shift the blame. The Chancellor had his full backing both on the counter-inflation policy and the expenditure review, save for the defence budget, on which he gave decisive support to Roy Mason. When his Foreign Secretary was out on a limb of his own making concerning the seat at the oil conference the Prime Minister worked quietly to retrieve him, taking stick himself at the Rome summit and in the Commons. He sees himself as the attacking centre-half and that indeed is how he plays the game.

In the interview with *Time* magazine, quoted above, he observed that inflation was not only disastrous in its economic consequences but could be a threat against democracy itself. He went on: 'But it's a much harder fight than tightening your belt against a common, identifiable and hated enemy. It was easy to portray Hitler as a hated enemy. Inflation is much more difficult to identify and personalise.'

The Baldwin Touch

Did he have Stanley Baldwin in mind? Baldwin's repeated theme in the early Thirties was that 'a democracy is always two years behind a dictator. In the 'appalling frankness' speech of 12 November 1936 (the occasion for Churchill's allegation that he 'put party before the country') Baldwin explained that he had not himself been in any doubt about the seriousness of the situation in 1933 and 1934 and of the need to rearm. But he had been obliged to recognise the strength of pacifist feeling in the country and reckon with the fact that to have sought a mandate to rearm might have resulted in losing the election to the party of disarmament. By delaying he had won a mandate for 'doing a thing that no one, 12 months before, would have believed possible'.

'Any fool can have confrontation. You can press at the wrong time and get the wrong answer, or you can work on people . . . If I'd tried to force the pace beyond what a democratic trade union movement was prepared to stand . . .' Or tried to force Europe on a divided party . . . or backed away too sharply from the manifesto . . . Baldwin presided over a period of national failure for which he was later made scapegoat. His party was bitterly divided but by holding it together he managed to hold the country together during a period of acute social and economic stress.

When war came Baldwin was vilified in his retirement. Now there is another view of him. He held the nation together through divisive times; he moved at democracy's pace and put 'safety first'; the nation's democratic institutions were handed over intact to the next generation. Will historians say the same of the Wilson era? Or will he become the scapegoat for the nation's economic failure?

As an interim judgment – for the Wilson era is by no means ended – he must have credit for demonstrating afresh the governability of the nation and restoring some equilibrium to its political life. In the two years since he returned to office in the midst of a crisis at once economic and political he has by cautious and conservative leadership restored the basis for government by consent. He has governed as Baldwin did in the spirit of the times. He has come closer than any other politician in his time to an instinctive understanding of the British people. It is not a heroic achievement. It will be for someone else to set the agenda for the next generation. But here we are still more or less in one piece and on the Prime Minister's 60th birthday we might render a preliminary thankful chorus of 'Here's to the Pilot that weathered the storm'.

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Alexander Cockburn

Carter's Place in the Sun

The question that follows from Jimmy Carter's victory over both George Wallace and Henry Jackson in last Tuesday's Florida primary is whether in fact he could ever be nominated. How seriously can his bid for the Democratic candidacy be taken? The problem arises not so much from reasonable suspicions about his political character but from the ineluctable fact that he is a Southerner. Carter is the first serious presidential candidate within reasonable memory to hail from the Deep South (a region which does not include Texas).

Carter stated the problem obliquely himself last weekend. 'Wallace can't be elected President,' he told an audience in Tampa. 'He's going to send a message to Washington. It's time for us to send a President to Washington.' To his audience the remark contained the nuance – typical of Carter – that the choice between the present Governor of Alabama and the former Governor of Georgia was not so much a matter of ideology but of tactical realism. But, to those removed from the immediate contagion of Carter's smile, the thought remains that while it may seem time, at least so far as Carter is concerned, for the South to send a President across the Potomac, the vice-presidency may be the best he can hope for.

At first glance Carter's triumph in Florida seems to be a shot in the arm for that body of opinion which holds that a fundamental change is taking place in the demographic, economic and political centre of gravity of the United States. Representative of such a view is the recent, widely discussed book by Kirkpatrick Sale called *Power Shift*. Sale snips off the bottom half of the United States and terms this region stretching from Southern California through to Florida, 'the sunbelt' or 'southern rim'. To the 'rim' are flocking people from the North and North East, seeking a final resting place in the sun. Alongside the great leisure and retirement zones of Florida, Arizona and Southern California sprout the rim's high technology industries, particularly those of defence and aerospace. Add in the oil wealth of Texas, the growing importance of Houston and Dallas as financial centres, Texas oil wealth, and Southern agriculture and you discover, in Sales's calculation, increased political clout at the expense of the old industrial states.

Florida is an interesting illustration of the basic thesis. It is the second fastest-growing state in the Union, after Arizona. Its colossal real estate explosion has spawned the condominia and funeral homes crammed in the southern part of the state, it has a bona fide 'New South' Governor in the liberal personage of Reuben Askew. But in the northern end of the state it also contains the Deep South, the old Confederate component of the southern rim: the rednecks who turned out for Wallace in 1972 and for Carter and Wallace this week.

Carter epitomises both these elements within the southern rim matrix. To the Old South he is the governorship candidate of 1970 who fought a Wallace-type campaign and who could not win Askew's endorsement this time round. (Askew, indeed, remarked that Carter had won in New Hampshire by shaking 50,000 hands to win 25,000 votes.) To the South he has the image of a country boy in overalls shovelling peanuts under the hot sun.

But he is also a new southern rim politician, low-key and, in the view of blacks endorsing and voting for him, no racist. For a serious shout at the presidency, he must perfect this admiration from the old Southern political context of Georgia to the vaster and more complex demands of the entire sunbelt, through Texas and up into Southern California. Only with this political base can he confidently address the contradiction in the thesis of the power shift: namely that a Southern political candidate still has to win primaries in the Northern industrial states, where organised labour is still highly potent. There is not much evidence as yet that Carter is well placed for such a task. Henry Jackson did well in those areas of Florida filled with refugees from the Northern cities. And Jackson, as I remarked last week, won in Massachusetts mainly through a tremendous effort on his behalf by organised labour there. Already he is being regarded as favourite to win in New York at the beginning of April.

Jackson, even so, could falter. Hubert Humphrey, as much beloved by labour, and more by liberals, stands ready to take his place. There has been continued talk of a Humphrey-Kennedy ticket – but added to such talk the growing realisation that at least one half of the slate will have to have been through the terrible mill of the primaries. Which is precisely where Carter's name, as a vice-presidential candidate, comes up.

Alas, for Ronald Reagan. He has lost now in the two conservative states which he had hoped would propel him forwards over the prostrate form of the President. His chances are now excessively dim.

It is an odd season. Just about a year ago the newspapers were beginning to report advances by North Vietnamese troops in the Central Highlands; the stock market and the economy were plunging down. In the aftermath of the Indochinese débâcle and of the US's humiliation over Angola every candidate now calls for a re-establishment of America's rightful position (first) in the world. Criticism of the largest (as usual) defence budget in history is muted; on the day of the Florida primary the Dow Jones industrial index hit 1,000 for the first time since 1973. (On the same day the *Wall Street Journal* remarked that New York State could still go bankrupt.) Ford even wins points for 'management' of the recovery as unemployment drops slightly to just over 7 per cent. It may not necessarily be, as one television pundit announced last week, that America is now more conservative that at any time since before the New Deal. Nonetheless the electoral process so far this year, after the first clutch of primaries, has not been an encouraging spectacle.

New York

Mary Holland

Ulster's Dangerous Vacuum

The recent arrest and subsequent release of the Provo leader, Martin McGuinness, sheds an eloquent light on the interaction of politics and security in Northern Ireland. It also shows the kind of box into which the British Government, lacking any obvious policy, could rapidly paint itself. Mr McGuinness used to be known as one of the most wanted men in Ireland, North or South. As the Provisionals' top man in Derry it used to be his boast that the IRA there had laid waste the city and cost heavy casualties to the security forces without the loss of a single civilian life.

So it was with interest that observers read of McGuinness's arrest. And then a curious tale began to emerge locally. It seems that the British Army had raided a house in the Bogside to arrest a local Provisional suspect. Somewhat to their embarrassment they found McGuinness in the house. They made clear that they had no intention of arresting him but, to their consternation, McGuinness insisted that he must accompany the arrested man to the barracks to represent his interests. Hurried calls were made to Army HQ and the officer in charge of the arrest party appears to have been told that on no account must McGuinness be brought to the barracks. At this stage he claimed, rather intriguingly, that he had a right to represent the arrested man because he was an elected member of the Bogside Community Association, a voluntary committee elected on a street to street basis to press for improvements in local amenities and so on. He then insisted on climbing into the army vehicle. All this had attracted some attention locally and by the time the entire party arrived at the barracks some enterprising observer had telephoned the BBC in Belfast with the news that Martin McGuinness had been lifted by the army. They in turn had phoned the army press office to discover what charges would be laid against the Provo leader. The army, with bitter memories of the wrath which followed a previous failure

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to arrest Seamus Twomey in Belfast, decided it had no alternative but to hang on to him. In due course he was charged with membership of the IRA. In due course he was released, all charges against him being dropped for lack of evidence.

Now that politics in Northern Ireland have been pronounced officially dead and buried with the ending of the Convention, it does sometimes seem that the only people with whom the British Government is prepared to conduct any meaningful discussions are the extremist organisations on both sides. So alarmed is Dublin by this possibility that when the Irish Premier, Liam Cosgrave, came to London last week the one thing he wanted written into the two Governments' joint communiqué was an assurance that there would be no negotiations with the para-militaries. Quite so, said the British Government, but Mr Rees would, of course, continue to see any legal organisations who desired an explanation of current policy. In Ulster, where almost everybody can produce a legal hat to wear when necessary, this includes a range of groups stretching from Provisional Sinn Fein through to the UDA. It is fairly openly admitted that discussions between British civil servants and the para-militaries are continuing on such matters as phasing out political status for prisoners and, rather less openly, on the problems of halting the present spate of bombs in England.

Mr Rees is known to hope that the result of institutionalising a political vacuum in Northern Ireland, by winding up the Convention and sacking its members, will be for old political groupings to break down and new ones to emerge. The possible advantages to a period of interregnum do exist. By removing the Convention's terms of reference Mr Rees also removes one prime inhibition to compromise on both sides, the necessity to be seen to cleave exactly to the terms of their respective election manifestos. He also cuts everyone down to the same importance, or lack of importance, which just might make it easier for previously incompatible shades of opinion to talk to one another. Since there are no longer any elected representatives to an Ulster assembly, the constant demands that the British Government deals only with elected representatives becomes irrelevant. If the Provos, or the Loyalist para-militaries, or anyone else, want to make their voices heard there is nothing to stop them.

Already there are signs of a breaking from old moulds which must be encouraging. The Convention's stormy end, and in particular the verbal violence inflicted on all and sundry by Dr Paisley, may have finally precipitated the beginning of the end of the United Ulster Unionist Coalition. The isolation of Dr Paisley is a necessary ingredient to any political progress in Northern Ireland and, if the Official Unionist John Taylor can persuade his party colleagues to break with him that is a considerable step forward and one which would have been impossible while the Convention lasted. The tragedy for Northern Ireland, as always, is that this latest break to moderation on the Protestant side is too little and too late to have any immediate effect.

For the dangers of Mr Rees's political vacuum are very great indeed. It may encourage political mobility and make it easier for the erstwhile outcasts of Ulster politics to join in meaningful discussions. Against that, the fact that there is now no obvious forum for debate, even one so lacking in real powers as the Convention, must seriously undermine the credibility of the existing politicians. More important, perhaps, in a situation where one hideous act of violence can polarise the communities overnight into a dreadful spiral of sectarian killings, there is now no place where the leaders of both communities can meet and where communal anger can, to a certain extent, be defused in angry talk rather than violent action.

Mr Rees's office is known to have a fairly complete contempt for the present crop of Ulster politicians as 'substandard'. Such British strategy as does exist appears to be directed to writing most of them off and encouraging a new class of '76 to come forward. This is a perilous gamble, for the facts of Ulster political life have repeatedly shown that it is the most extreme who hang grimly on and the younger moderates who weary of the whole business. This time their disillusion with politics will be reinforced by the practical need to earn a living as the Convention salaries disappear. Maybe, as Mr Rees seems to hope, the para-military organisations will begin to show a new aptitude for politics as the art of the possible. Maybe new men will come forward. If not the day may come soon when he, or his successor, regrets the decision to consign Ulster's 'substandard' politicians to limbo.

Mervyn Jones

Solzhenitsyn's Old Song

One of the vices of television is to convey a perpetual illusion of novelty, obscuring the traditions that shape words and thoughts. Consider this interview:

> You don't think that material security is a valid goal?
>
> There is a curious paradox. A man is offered full security, promised food and drink, and found work, and as against this he is merely required to give up a tiny grain of his personal freedom for the sake of the common good – just a tiny, tiny grain. But man does not want to live on these conditions, he finds even the tiny grain too irksome.
>
> And have you been disappointed in what you've seen of the Western world?
>
> All the populace here can read and write, but every one of them is devoid of high ideals.
>
> So you're not happy living in the West?
>
> In three months we shall have been exactly two years abroad. In my opinion it is worse than deportation to Siberia. I mean that quite seriously.

I have invented the questions; the answers are the words of Dostoievsky, written more than a century ago. The parallel between Dostoievsky's intellectual development and that of Alexander Solzhenitsyn is so striking as to appear almost fore-ordained. As a young man Dostoievsky was attracted by socialist ideas, in particular those of Fourier. Russian backwardness was to be overcome by abolishing the extremes of wealth and poverty and by conscious social planning. As a prisoner in Siberia he came to feel that these superficial, imported theories threatened the inner freedom and the spiritual nature of the ordinary Russian. 'Brotherhood' was the Fourierist ideal, but in 1862 Dostoievsky was asking: 'How can there possibly be any brotherhood if it is preceded by a distribution of shares and by determining how much each person has earned and what each must do?' In the West, he found nothing but spiritual emptiness. He renounced all faith in social change and ended his life as a conservative.

Dostoievsky's change of direction was gradual (Turgenev believed him to be a fellow-progressive until their famous quarrel) and the same has been true of Solzhenitsyn. Shulubin, the labour-camp veteran in *Cancer Ward* who appears to voice the author's outlook, repudiates the perversion of socialism that we call Stalinism, but emphatically tells a younger character:

> Don't ever blame socialism for the sufferings and the cruel years you've lived through. However you think about it, history has rejected capitalism once and for all!

Citing Tolstoy and Kropotkin as intellectual

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forebears, Shulubin takes his stand on 'ethical socialism'. He explains:

> Ethical demands must determine all considerations: how to bring up children, what to train them for, to what end the work of grown-ups should be directed, and how their leisure should be occupied.

This prescription clearly assumes an extensive measure of social control over (as Dostoievsky would have put it) 'what each must do'. Just as clearly, it is based on a social theory – an ideology. But by the time Solzhenitsyn writes *The Gulag Archipelago* he is ascribing 'the sufferings and the cruel years' to what, in a passage of derisive eloquence, he calls 'cursed ideology'. It is, moreover, evident that he doesn't mean merely the ideology of Stalinism or even of Leninism, but ideology in general. It is because the repression of the Soviet period was ideologically inspired, Solzhenitsyn tells us, that it has been harsher and more all-pervasive than the repression of the Czars, which had no ideological basis.

In fact, denunciation of ideology is always a conservative stance. A trivial instance would be the young lady quoted in *This England* as saying: 'I don't have any political views. I always vote Conservative.' Slightly more serious are the scores of 'independent' councillors whose slogan is 'Keep politics out of local government', and who seldom turn out to be left of Centre. The kind of 'politics' or 'ideology' being attacked is that which seeks to change the traditional social structure.

But conservatism itself is nevertheless an ideology. It maintains that any assertion of collective power, and in particular that of the state – especially in the economic sphere, into 'what each must do' – is destructive of freedom. The argument was set out years ago in books like Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*; a simplified version is regularly obtainable from Mrs Thatcher.

The socialist reply is that the unregulated society has never really existed. The state and the law consistently enforced the authority of the possessing classes over tenants in Burke's England, slaves in Jefferson's Virginia, and serfs in Czarist Russia. In our own memories, dictatorial powers and harsh repression have proved fully consistent with 'free enterprise', whether in the colonial world or in Europe in the guise of fascism – always in the name of eliminating 'anarchy' or 'disorder'. My first doubts about Solzhenitsyn arose when, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, he chided Western liberals for getting so worked up about the colonels' regime in Greece.

Conservatives are naturally delighted with Solzhenitsyn's plea that the West should stop surrendering its positions to the enemy ideology. On this view, Allende's Chile was a lost position while Pinochet's Chile is a reinforced position. Events in Angola, however, show the deplorable weakness of the West. Solzhenitsyn's impregnable moral stature lends dignity to his advocacy, but the policy itself is much the same when urged, let's say, by Ronald Reagan. For myself I find it just as moral and considerably more rational to be glad that Angola hasn't become a new Vietnam, in which the banner of the 'free world' would have been carried by South Africa.

The interviewer on *Panorama* was trading on short memories when he asked Solzhenitsyn to comment on Bertrand Russell's alleged dictum: 'Better red than dead.' Russell in fact didn't coin this phrase; such cheap capsules were as alien to his style as to Solzhenitsyn's. But the face of the old philosopher, close to tears as he pleaded against the jeopardising of all human achievement and the entire human future in nuclear war, was fully in a class with last Monday's event among the rare images that raise television above the trivial. The moral aura then was certainly Russell's, and a moral aura is not to be transferred to make a political effect.

From the day when I read *Ivan Denisovich* I have recognised Solzhenitsyn as a man of heroic spirit and total integrity, as well as a magnificent writer. I would expand on this eulogy if it had not (now that he is a conservative) become so conventional. Sadly, the political opinions of great artists have not always been wiser than those of ordinary mortals. The novels of Tolstoy and Dostoiesvky, not their *ex cathedra* statements, are their imperishable legacy. As the sensation of last week's *Panorama* interview fades, I wait eagerly for Solzhenitsyn's next novel.

Audrey Harvey

The Case of Mrs Gill's Breakfast

In a recent Radio 3 discussion, 'New Dimensions in English Law', Lord Justice Scarman argued for the involvement of lawyers in supplementary benefit tribunal appeals, even on the simpler matters, since a poor person whose request is turned down, and who hasn't been able to pay a solicitor to represent him, may feel unjustly used. The point is all the more valid in that, while there are simpler matters than, say, cohabitation, nothing to do with assessing poverty is ever simple. A man needing an overcoat may be told that he shouldn't smoke or keep a dog or take a newspaper. In fact, what looks like a fairly simple matter, perhaps not rating a lawyer, can rapidly turn into something of surprising difficulty and importance.

Feverishly telephoning against the pips, Mrs Gill said she was in bed-and-breakfast with Stella (eight) and Marigold (six), was homeless, deserted by her husband, imminently expecting twins and was getting 'the assistance' (supplementary benefit) but hadn't been able to pay her rent. That last word at once suggested something odd. Boarding-house landladies don't charge rent. A mistake perhaps? No – the official explanatory form confirmed that £10 was being allowed for rent. Because Mrs Gill was in arrears, this £10 was now being paid direct to the London borough which had 'placed' her and had itself stated that the accommodation was bed-and-breakfast. Indeed there was a muddling deduction for breakfasts and for 'amenities' amounting to over half the rent. There was also a delightfully named 'anomaly payment' without which the family would have been even worse off. None of the senior information officers consulted could understand a word of this.

When Mrs Gill could at last be questioned, it emerged that she was in an ordinary and quite good furnished flat, one of seven others in a huge privately-owned house with stained glass windows where 'breakfasts' were delivered by a manager for each of the seven homeless families in it. What made this all the more suspicious was that they could have catered more economically for themselves but had no choice. Mrs Gill found three dozen eggs a week excessive and could not even give them away because all the other mothers were up to their eyes in eggs, and in cornflakes from giant packets, also. It had to be put to the local authority – and would have come more impressively from a solicitor – that with no resident landlady and no 'attendance' such as serving and washing up, this was not bed-and-breakfast; and that since the supplementary benefit system does not cater for such an irregular set-up the families were being unnecessarily impoverished. Not unexpectedly, there was no reply.

Of course the landlord knew that the protection of furnished tenants under Labour's 1974 Rent Act does not extend to lodgings where the value of 'board' is 'substantial'. But what he had apparently not realised is that 'board' is not legally synonymous with the delivery of uncooked eggs and groceries. The local authority hadn't either. Housing departments, now responsible for homeless families, deal with council houses, not with the niceties of the Rent Acts, which affect only private landlords. They don't concern themselves with supplementary benefits either, although the amounts allowed very closely affect the capacity of the poorest families to pay rent and, indeed, to avoid getting into a dangerous state of desperation at times of crisis such as when a husband has left and twins are due to arrive.

Largely by dint of murmuring about having to go to the press or the Ombudsman, the local authority had been induced to speak; and although a little uneasy about

This America

☐ The Indiana chamber of the Klu Klux Klan has joined the ranks of those fighting to enforce dress codes. The organisation's newsletter complains that too many members are showing up at rallies without a robe. 'It's just this simple: If you can't afford a robe, you can't afford to belong to the Klan,' the newsletter warns. – *International Herald Tribune* (Eric Clark)

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the ethics of its connivance with the landlord, it could claim to have gained not only seven flats for its homeless families, but a good many more houses on the same pattern. Resistance to change was going to be all the more tough. The price paid was the economic rent, likely to be £30 a week per flat, the area being desirable; and no doubt the landlord, who could make his own terms, charged for the breakfasts too.

Where homeless families are so lodged that they can cater for themselves, like tenants, a local authority charge – £10 in this case – can be treated under the supplementary benefit system as rent. If any services such as heating and lighting are provided by the landlord, deductions are made from the allowance; but the standard amounts for each service are not divulged by the Commission in its official handbook, and to get these without a protracted struggle one needs to know a renegade officer who has joined the claimant's union. Not unexpectedly, though, officers get no secret A-code directives about what to deduct for unsolicited breakfast food and here an arbitrary sum had been deducted. The thought then occurred that its provision may not constitute a service or an amenity in law: one can't see Lord Justice Scarman, who actually looks at landlords' services from the recipient's point of view, accepting it as either. This, therefore, might be a good ground for appeal.

It doesn't do, though, for representatives of the poor to be too legalistic. They can't go on for days as if in the Court of Appeal and won't be listened to for five minutes unless dressed – and, for men, 'coiffed' – in a seemly manner and making a 'common-sense approach'. The presence of lawyers as advocates must result in the appointment of lawyers as chairmen, as in national insurance tribunals. Meanwhile it might be best simply to plead that the deductions for breakfasts and amenities, both of which are purely discretionary, leave Mrs Gill with £12.65 a week with which to pay for clothes, fares, all household and personal necessities and 42 lunches and suppers – although, even so, she might be expected by the tribunal to use the excess eggs and cornflakes for those. What, however, would most benefit all the mothers, and not make Mrs Gill conspicuous, which she fears, would be to get those breakfasts removed. Ironically, they serve no purpose whatever. All the landlord needed to do to protect his interest was, and is, to contract to provide temporary accommodation to the local authority.

While the involvement of lawyers would be helpful at this stage, and every other, of negotiations whether with the Commission or the local authority, it would also, so one well-worn argument goes, disastrously formalise proceedings. But formalising is just what these secret, haphazard and often defamatory trials could do with. Why they should be prescribed only for impecunious people contesting financial decisions whereas in their capacity as tenants or even debtors they are formally and much more fairly judged in the county courts, no one can say. That supplementary benefit, or public assistance, is classed as a new dimension in English law is not without significance – or hope.

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Maurice Peston*

The Philosophy of Public Spending

There appear to be as many possible views of the Public Expenditure White Paper as there are commentators on it. For some it remains what its predecessors were, and what the Chancellor wants this one to be, a technical exercise to do with the particular circumstances of the day and their likely future development in the medium term. Good management of the economy and a new strategy to stimulate industrial growth require restraint in public expenditure on goods and services to make room for exports and industrial investment, and restraint on transfer payments to assist the incomes policy and reduce the disincentive effects of high marginal rates of income tax. The fact that there is little or no evidence for the crowding-out hypothesis (i.e. that high public expenditure has *caused* low investment and exports) is neither here nor there. Equally, one can only envy the ability of Mr Healey in his empirical researches in the Labour clubs of Leeds to substantiate the disincentive theory when the efforts of two decades of professional economic researchers have so abysmally failed. (I suppose they are arguing up there that United were knocked out of the cup by Palace because the latter, being paid less, had a lower marginal tax rate and a greater incentive to win.) Nonetheless, given the uncertainties of economics, and the general environment in which decisions have to be taken the Chancellor is entitled to take a view, and those of us who would have chosen a rather different combination of measures should allow him the benefit of the doubt while retaining the right to continue the argument and even to say I told you so, if things turn out badly.

If it were all a matter of technical economics, there would be no major intellectual problem for the Labour Party, no identity crisis or need for concern about whether we are all wasting our time. We could exchange views on the precise size, structure, and timing of the cuts suggesting small variations, all of which lie within the margin of error of the figures, anyway. But we could remain confident that the social democratic movement is sound in mind and limb, and was confidently continuing to march towards the construction of social democracy itself. We are pausing on the road for no other reason than that we have been bounding ahead so rapidly and could all do with a breather.

It is here that the second view emerges, suggesting that something much more fundamental is taking place. The White Paper is not to be interpreted as an exercise in demand management and medium-term economic planning, but as a philosophical statement different from and possibly incompatible with what many people in the Labour Party thought they were about. Events of the past couple of years have led us close to the Holy Land of social democracy, but we do not like what we can see, and must pull back.

Certainly, any reader of the opening chapter of the White Paper must be puzzled by what he finds there, or, more to the point, of what he fails to see. Its tone is not that we have, perhaps, more by luck than judgment, gone a bit too fast, and rather over-extended the public sector (but let us risk keeping it up and see where we will get to). It is not even to assert that we were right in Opposition to criticise the Tories for their comparatively meanness, but that we must wait a few years for the economy to come right before we can fully meet our commitments. Rather it implies that, even when the balance of payments is back in surplus, when the inflation rate is quite low, and when a new higher growth rate is achieved, there will remain a question mark over the public sector.

Nowhere do we find a recognition that our desire for more equality and our method of achieving it necessitate high marginal tax rates during one's working life and an increased ratio of transfer payments to gross domestic product. Nowhere is it pointed out that what we are already committed to do in education or in the other social services, for that matter, continues to be worth doing, although it requires a trend in expenditure above the average of the Seventies. To take the obvious example, since no one doubts that economic growth will continue, whey should we not reiterate the correctness of a replacement programme for old school buildings and hospitals? As we grow richer are we supposed to believe it makes sense to lower commitment to the mentally and physically handicapped, at the one extreme, and to the non-academic school leaver, at the other? It is almost as if the authors of the White Paper were adopting one of two seemingly extreme positions: either that social democracy was impossible, or else far from being impossible we actually have it already, and that all the social problems we see around us are products of over-fertile imaginations.

A curiosity of the debate that is now starting is its political complexion. The implication is that the cuts in public expenditure are a particular blow to the Left of the Labour Party, and that this is exemplified by the resignation of Joan Lestor. My own opinion is that the reverse is true, and that the real calamity is befalling what Eric Heffer called Crosland and Hattersley socialism. Undoubtedly as a Crossland/Hattersley socialist I see it that way myself. For the Marxist or even the pure Clause IV socialist there is no problem, because he never expected anything different. He has argued all along that the path of public expenditure and redistributive taxation was a mirage; in the end it would never really be tried, or, if tried, would quickly run up against forces that would destroy it. Something much more fundamental, to do with the ownership and control of means of production, had to occur as a prerequisite of other changes. Similarly, the progressive liberals in the party did not see social democracy as all that desirable in the first place. Their concern was to deal with special cases of social difficulty as they emerged, but to go no further. The more passive were content to wait until action had to be taken to avoid calamity, although the more active ones might actually wish to seek out social problems in order to solve them.

The Crosland/Hattersley socialists are utopian both in the sense of regarding large-scale social reform as possible, and in the specific objective they set themselves, which was to promote both equality and liberty. Their claim has been that we can build a fairer society within the context of the mixed economy, the key weapons being public expenditure, on the one side, and progressive taxation, on the other. Moreover, while being willing to lead public opinion (and, therefore, be paternalistic up to that point) social democracy claimed not to be coercive in a totalitarian way. Finally, there is no denying that education was seen to have a special important role in social reform, and was not simply an activity like any other, to compete for a place in the expenditure programme and take its fair share of the cuts.

That is why the White Paper is such a defeat for them. The priority given to education has fallen. Certainly, Fred Mulley would be right to claim that education has not done at all badly, relatively speaking; and there is, indeed, an improvement factor still included in the budget for schools. The question is whether 'no worse than average' is a sufficiently high priority for a service which for most of this century has been given pride of place in social democratic, reformist thinking.

More generally, the tone of the White Paper is contained in this quotation: 'Popular expectations for improved public services and welfare programmes have not been matched by the growth in output – or by willingness to forgo improvements in private living standards in favour of those programmes.' Now, as a matter of fact, neither part of this statement is true. The volume of resources devoted to public services has increased but not all that much relative to gross domestic product over the past decade or so, and there is little evidence that people are under the impression that these services do not have to be paid for,

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Before the 'sixties very little effort was made to use energy efficiently in large buildings. The Electricity Boards were among the first to recognise the importance of re-thinking contemporary building design with specific regard for energy use. They sponsored research by the Department of Building Science at Newcastle University into the performance of different building designs and their effect on the internal environment–the latter from the viewpoint of working efficiency, comfort and energy usage. The results from the research have enabled Electricity Boards' engineers to advise knowledgeably on the energy consumption implications of applying various building forms.

Taking our own medicine

The first buildings in the UK designed and constructed to Energy Management principles were for various Electricity Boards. The very first was the Wallsend meter testing station which was designed and erected in close collaboration with Professor Hardy's research team at Newcastle.

The lessons learned from these early buildings, gained by continuously monitoring the performance, have been invaluable to designers and engineers of more recent projects. For example, the Leeds area office for the Yorkshire Board, designed in 1968, achieved high thermal efficiency; but a second project at Bradford, of similar design, achieved an even bigger saving in energy costs–thanks to the practical experience from Leeds.

The Bolton office of the North Western Electricity Board is a recent example of the progress that is being achieved by synthesising the experience from previous energy efficient building projects. This single-storey building has a floor area of 4,029 m^2 (43,368 ft^2). Excellent working conditions are achieved throughout the year with minimal expenditure of energy. Efficient heat-recovery techniques are employed which make it self-heating down to 7°C (45°F). The total building energy costs for the full year of 1975 were just under £3 per square metre (£0·28p/ft^2).

Shared experience

The experience acquired by the Electricity Supply Industry in the design and operation of its own buildings is available to private industry and already many of these energy management concepts have been applied to good effect in private projects. Just one of the many ways in which Electricity specialists are helping commerce and industry to use energy more efficiently.

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or are not ready to contribute themselves. The expansion of the public sector over the past decades and its consequences have been understood and accepted by the general public. Most of the complaints I hear emanate from those with above-average incomes. As a minister in the present Government once put it to me: 'The ladies and gentlemen taking tea at Fortnum's are genuinely worried that we are spending too much on the maintained schools.'

The experience of the past couple of years is exceptional in two ways. Firstly, the gross domestic product is very much below trend, implying a relative position for public expenditure which would automatically be modified as we return to full employment. Secondly, over the two years 1971-73, consumer expenditure rose by more than 10 per cent in real terms, and until the recession of 1974-5 was itself well above trend. The cutbacks since then have not cancelled out the earlier boom, and have not been caused by excessive government expenditure.

Reducing Inequality

My concern, therefore, is that the proposition in the White Paper is not intended to be factual, but rather is typically a normative statement in positive clothing. It is the direct counterpart of that old civil service gambit: 'We know what you want to do, Minister, and, indeed, are most sympathetic towards it, but unfortunately, it is just not feasible.' What it is really trying to say to us is not that we have to cut the long-term growth of public expenditure but that we ought to. The correct response, therefore, is twofold – to argue that we ought not to cut public expenditure, and to ask how are we to achieve our objectives if we do.

Concerning the latter, it is worth reflecting briefly on how anybody thought we could use the tax transfer system to promote equality without increasing the fraction of this type of public expenditure to national income. It is a matter of simple arithmetic that if the degree of inequality before tax is given, and the objective is to reduce it after tax, both taxes and transfer payments must rise. The more we wish to reduce inequality this way, the larger the proportion of public expenditure to national incomes. There is simply no avoiding the issue, and it is certainly not one which can be regarded as solved by accelerating economic growth. Indeed, if faster growth is achieved by adopting certain kinds of incentives it may increase inequality and absolute poverty. We may end up with more resources to solve our problems, but the problems themselves may be that much worse. The job that the transfer payments have to do would have got more difficult, so to reach the same post-tax distribution of incomes would itself require increasing the public expenditure ratio.

The deceptive nature of the accelerated growth argument occurs also with respect to the other social services. The White Paper tells us that what we want to do in health, education, etc. depends on faster growth. But it fails to recognise that the extra investment and private consumption that may be the means of getting that growth may actually leave less for the public sector. Furthermore, voters' preferences here are not neutral. A self-sustaining system built on private spending may be able to afford more public services, but for the same reason may not wish to buy them. The US is the obvious example of the social costs of growth. As conventionally measured that country is richer than we are, but according to many criteria of importance to the Labour Party it is much poorer – and urgently in need of help.

To complicate the growth aspect of the matter further, suppose working people were persuaded to take any extra growth of productivity in the form of more leisure and a better quality of working life. The effect of pursuing such sensible objectives would cause measured incomes to be lower than would otherwise be the case, and again would magnify the public expenditure ratio.

Lastly, on this theme, do not forget that transfer payments are not only from people to other people, but actually from people to themselves in changing circumstances. The working people of today are the pensioners of tomorrow; the single people of today were the children of yesterday and are the parents of tomorrow. The employed of today may be unemployed tomorrow, and the wife today may be the single parent of tomorrow. The true distributive element is much less than is commonly supposed, and in terms of life experience our society remains extremely unequal. It is hard to see that we have already so caused people to transfer their spending over their lifetimes and among themselves that liberty is in danger. But if it is, then social democracy is not possible *and never was*, at least if we are to go on using the methods on which all post-war Labour Party policy has been built, and which are biased in favour of the public sector.

Of course, the cabinet may have discovered that those methods are all wrong and new ones must be tried. Free-market Tories have argued for years that private pension schemes can be introduced that only need to be topped up by the state. Negative income tax may take certain amounts from both the tax and expenditure side of the Government's accounts. An extension of means-tested charges for public services would reduce public expenditure as conventionally measured. But the point is to judge these changes on their merits, and to see if they actually reduce inequality without having other, undesirable side effects. Their effect on total public expenditure as such is neither here nor there, and is a cosmetic matter. And to suggest that they promote liberty as contrasted with existing policies is simply preposterous.

The reduction of inequality may reduce the freedom of the better off (while enhancing that of the worse off), but this does not depend on whether they are taxed and receive some of the money back, or are simply taxed at a lower rate. More generally, it is surely obvious that there is no simple correlation between public expenditure and economic freedom (without, of course, begging the question of the relationship between economic freedom and freedom in general). It is possible to conceive of an economy with little explicit public ownership and few public services, but with such a proliferation of rules and regulations that economic freedom was low to the point of non-existence. At the other extreme one might use the tax-transfer system to spread incomes more equally across society and across individual lifetimes, but leave all economic activity to private enterprise. Neither extreme is desirable, but they are sufficient to show that the connection between public expenditure and liberty is most complicated.

One interpretation of the present crisis is that it is a heaven-sent opportunity to introduce long-overdue reforms, and to restructure expenditure in a more progressive way. With the aggregate sums fixed, political and official energies will be released to be devoted to other jobs. Now, obviously, there is something in this; at the very least there is the cynical view that ministers anxious to occupy their day will be receptive of new ideas. All of us can think of changes that need to be made in the system. (In fact, those of us who favour the public sector, simply because of the extra knowledge we have gained by our commitment, can produce much more powerful criticisms of its detailed failings than its opponents, who are usually characterised by their ignorance, could ever do.)

Urgent Urban Reforms

A list of reforms would start with urban policy. It is about time something really drastic was done about the schools in the inner city. Policy has not failed in this area; it has simply not really got going. The schools need a larger share of available resources, especially good teachers, and deserve more of the attention of administrators. Much of the remedial effort in the secondary schools could better be diverted to the primary schools to prevent the problems emerging in the first place. Turning to the NHS, it is also about time that these same areas had a decent general-practitioner service instead of the absentee doctors they presently have to put up with. More generally in health there are resources to be reallocated by making treatment less institutional and concentrating more on the home. And, of course, in education there is at least £20m. to be saved per annum simply by removing all forms of state support for the private sector. In housing everybody knows that too little of the subsidy goes to those in greatest need, and not enough is done to increase available low cost accommodation. If housing policy were more closely coordinated with educational policy, some problems of one-class comprehensives would be eased. Equally, general subsidies to nationalised industries make little sense, and it is right to see them phased out. It is also important that a proper climate of rational decision-making is reintroduced for them along the lines of the Select Committee report on Ministerial Control.

But, having made these and many other similar points, it is necessary to utter the platitude that there is a world of difference between the opportunities emerging and their actually being taken. There is hardly a word to be found in the White Paper of ministerial determination to change the

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detailed form of expenditure, and to take away from some in order to give to others. The reasons are fairly obvious. One is the conservatism of the professionals in most services who talk a more progressive line than they are actually willing to take. Another is the fact that there are few reforms that are totally costless, especially in their initial phases. Even something as simple as meeting the eventual recommendations of the Taylor Committee on governors and managers, which I hope will be in the direction of democratising those bodies, will cost some money. The Bullock report on reading contains vast numbers of important recommendations, but few of them are entirely costless. And, of course, many reforms simply cannot be financed by restructuring but depend on the provision of major amounts of extra resources. To take two examples, both in education; I cannot see how, when the Warnock Committee reports, we will be able to do much for the handicapped without a great deal of money, and with the best will in the world the Labour Party and TUC commitment to provision for the 16-19-year-old cannot possibly be met on the cheap. So I can accept the heaven-sent opportunity theory without regarding it as a panacea.

Ministerial Dilemma

Anybody with experience of the public sector can produce a virtually infinite list of needs and demands yet to be met, so that it cannot be argued on some grounds of satiation that as a long-term policy the growth of public expenditure, either absolutely or relative to national income, has come to an end. Even to restrict ourselves to the Labour Party's policy document of 1973, meeting the objectives set out there for education at the rate of increase of expenditure of the 1970s would take to the end of the century. This places ministers and the party in a difficult position.

I have suggested that ordinary people remain favourably disposed towards the social services. Their attitudes to them, however, do not emerge automatically, but are founded partly on direct experience and partly on what is said about them. There is no shortage of attacks on the social services, and few are of a constructive kind by people fundamentally sympathetic to them. It is vital that there remain voices speaking out in support of education, health, pensions etc., chief among which must surely be ministers themselves. The climate of opinion is created by ministerial leadership and persuasion. But is that possible any more?

Given the White Paper, ministerial speeches must be strictly circumscribed for fear they include anything which might be regarded as contradicting it. Even those statements which are intended as a preliminary to reallocation of resources are suspect because the reallocation itself might be in doubt. Consider the position of the Minister of State for Higher Education. Dare he make a speech praising the value of a degree without being thought to be encouraging an increase in applications to universities and polytechnics? What about the attitude of the junior minister to staying on in sixth forms? Is the Minister of Health to keep silent on the deficiencies of our mental hospitals and of psychiatric care in general? Will not the slightest remark by the Secretary of State for the Environment (especially him), suggesting that aesthetic considerations should be taken into account in redesigning city centres, be just the first step on the slippery slope to spending more money? Even the Home Secretary may feel disinclined to press for extra recruitment to the police in case this creates expectations for a degree of law and order which the country cannot afford!

In this connection it must be emphasised that Crosland/Hattersley socialism depends heavily on administrative procedures, and assumes the existence of a civil service with high morale ready to serve the Government's ends. In fact, public-sector employment grew from 24 per cent of the labour force in 1964 to rather more than 27 per cent in 1974, and was presumably rather more still in 1975. (The increase is entirely in central and local government since nationalised industry employment and the armed forces have declined.) This seems to me to be a reasonable measure of what might be meant by the size of the public sector, and, although this is a matter of judgment, can hardly be regarded as excessive. This expansion does not correspond to the proliferation of bureaucrats that we are warned about; and my own view is that the data do not support the proposition that the troubles of the private sector, either in general or specifically in industrial manufacturing, are due to excessive aggregate growth of public-sector employment. I hope, therefore, that someone will stand up for the bureaucracy against unfair attack. This is not to say that public officials are perfect. Many criticisms of them, as of the public sector as a whole, are valid, but this is a far cry from the blanket condemnations of the past year. In the end it becomes a matter of for or against, not because supporters of the public sector are uncritical, but because their opponents are unbalanced.

Again, let me emphasise this is not a plea for blanket support of public expenditure. I will condemn Concorde, Chrysler, Coven Garden Opera and cocktail parties at overseas embassies as rapidly as the next man. One need not hesitate in querying how in the midst of our economic troubles Kent can find funds to support a voucher experiment, Bucks can provide grants to the local private college, and Surrey, with spare places in its own schools, can pay for some of its children to attend fee-paying ones.

Certainly much more could be done to promote a more equitable distribution of total government expenditure. I will even join the critics of Treasury control, although what they have to say is grossly exaggerated. It is simply that there is another point of view, and social democratic members of the Government must take the lead in expressing it. Indeed, given that the issue is the very nature of the mixed economy and the method of achieving it, they should welcome the opportunity of joining in the debate. Instead, it looks as if we can expect to see an extension of ministerial caution based on 'Yes, it would be a good idea if only we could afford it', which at best will see the case go by default, but more likely will actually undermine the public sector.

Retrenching with Relish

It is one thing to adopt that posture as part of a crisis package to cope with the inflation of 1975. To give the Chancellor's strategy a chance the strategy must continue for a while longer. But ultimately its effect is necessarily to weaken the case for the public sector if for no other reason than that depends on continuous education and persuasion of the public. After all, there is no likelihood of the other side quietening down (although with some of its friends present and erstwhile, socialism is not exactly in need of enemies). The cuts they want require real damage to the maintained system of education and to the NHS, and an acceptance that social security payments are already too high relative to average incomes. A few local authorities are retrenching with a relish which is not surprising, but which we would like to hear various Secretaries of State condemn. But will they?

I would like to believe so, and that I am unduly pessimistic about the future of social democracy. There is the obvious point that perhaps the full cuts will never happen and soon it will be full steam ahead. There is always the consideration that no one, not even Mrs Thatcher, believes in reducing public expenditure, but only the parts they do not like. Anyway, once we return to full employment and a balance of payments surplus, it is just possible that the protagonists of the public sector will not all have given up. More likely the signs are that the reactionaries will win the day on one side, the extreme Left will regard themselves as fully justified on the other, and reforming social democrats will have to fight their battles all over again. Altogether it does seem to me that the Government had the chance to win the philosophical battle and take a decisive step forward – and they threw it.

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Kingsley Amis

Words and Meanings

This is the first of some occasional articles on the present condition of our language. Where possible I will stick to real examples, which may be silently shortened when convenient and altered in immaterial detail so as to avoid unnecessary embarrassment. Any invented or approximate examples will be put in quotes. But before I introduce either sort I had better offer something in the way of a declaration of principles. It is subject to revision.

I once held the view, still quite common, that language was a self-renewing, self-regulating, self-sufficient organism, to be approached with due regard to lucidity, vigour and the like but without any trammels imposed by notions of correctness. The meaning of a word was its use, linguistically as philosophically, and its origin and previous history might be interesting enough, but were irrelevant to that meaning. And when a new meaning appeared alongside an old one it acquired instant parity of esteem. So, for example, you could talk about astronomical odds no less readily and innocently than about astronomical charts.

But did you so talk? The troublesome question about any new usage was not whether you approved of it coming from others but whether you would speak or write it yourself. In my experience, you answered that reasons of style or tone or contextual congruence or something ruled out those astronomical odds so far as you personally were concerned, but everyone else was welcome to them. Notions of correctness, pushed out in the name of reason and social decency (because *I ain't got none* had to be accounted just as 'good' as *I haven't any*), were sneaking in again dressed up as aesthetics.

The other weakness in the permissive position is that, as in other spheres, it makes most sense when the majority know and observe the conventions. This was so until quite recently, until the effects of modern educational systems and theories began to be felt. Nowadays it's an exceptional newspaper article, say, that is altogether free of solecisms, and we have among us a prize-winning novelist who can't punctuate: more to the point, perhaps, her publisher can't either. And along with a failing grasp of the conventions comes an assault on the principle of having conventions. A forcibly-urged and apparently unironical piece in the *Sunday Times* of 7 December 1975 said that illiteracy was not just okay – nothing new in that – but bloody good, because the written word had served its purpose and must be scrapped. It might be the moment to reconsider what I will call the prescriptive position (usually, in practice, a *pro*scriptive position).

This is not, or need not be, hostile to linguistic innovation as such. New fields of study, new commodities, new attitudes need new terms and new combinations or senses of existing ones. What arouses hostility is innovation that seems with no sufficient reason to create an unnecessary synonym, to destroy a real distinction, to impair a concept, to facilitate ambiguity or dishonesty, to offer the reader even the most trivial and momentary misdirection, to strive after colour or dignity – above all, to *get it wrong* with, once more, no sufficient reason. Belief in the importance of simply getting it right, the base of the prescriptive position, has declined. There may still be some life in the notion that not to be seen handling the language ignorantly or insensitively is important. No weakness attaches to the fact that what constitutes such handling, or its opposite, must be a matter for debate. Literary criticism flourishes under the same limitation.

What is a serious weakness of this position is that people pay no attention to it. So, after nearly 100 years and 1,000 denunciations of the use, *disinterested* has come to be a superfluous by-form of *uninterested* and can no longer be used in its original, unparaphrasable sense without risk of confusion. *Hopefully* as a floating adverb, the most reviled newcomer I can remember, is now firmly established as a politician's synonym for *with luck*, and has already spawned horrible progeny like *thankfully*, *gratefully* and more:

> Americans and Russians are about to meet in space. Only a few years ago, such a co-operative expedition couldn't have happened. That the two rivals can now cooperate is – optimistically – a sign that both are growing up.

Could you face saying that in any circumstances? If not, could you be justified in writing it? Does one recorded appearance amount to established usage?

Well, the decline goes on. But, just possibly, it goes on because we let it. In his *Politics and the English Language*, still required reading for anybody interested in either topic, Orwell writes of 'silly' words and expressions that they can be expelled by the conscious action of a minority. 'Two recent examples,' he says 'were *explore every avenue* and *leave no stone unturned*, which were killed by the jeers of a few journalists.' Have the last 30 years robbed us of all will to jeer? What is needed is a kind of shock brigade of linguistic militants, as visualised by Paul Johnson in a valuable and entertaining piece in the *Daily Telegraph* (28 February). The first objective, of special significance in a culture like ours, is to make illiteracy unfashionable.

Real ambiguity, as distinct from the infliction of a moment of pointless puzzlement, very rarely results from verbal misuse. But in some contexts it will soon be difficult to use the word *refute* and be sure of being correctly understood. The following examples are all recent:

> Mr Ian Gilmour, Shadow Defence spokesman, said that the most significant feature of Soviet protests was their failure to *refute* any of Mrs Thatcher's facts.

This is the proper use, as a rough synonym for *overthrow by argument and/or evidence* or *establish the falsity of* or *disprove*. Something quite different is being said in the next three quotations.

> Your report implies that my company is preparing to use dogs in its research. May I take this opportunity of *refuting* this categorically. [Question-mark missing in original.] We have no such intention, nor would we contemplate such a programme.

> Reports said that an experimental stout called Black Steel was to be put on the market, in direct competition to Guinness. But a company spokesman *refuted* this: 'There's no way we're going to take on Guinness.'

> In a television interview, Senator Richard Schweiker *refuted* the suggestion that the CIA might have acted 'like a rogue elephant' without White House authority in its assassination plans.

What these three people are doing is *deny* an implication, some reports and a suggestion. No argument or evidence is put forward and nothing is established or disproved. But the unwary reader is quite likely to be conned into thinking that something more substantial than a mere denial has been offered. Here is a handy little tool for the deceitful.

As often, the genesis of the new use is clear enough. Unattractive foreign governments and criminal suspects *deny* things. Mandy Rice-Davies must have done as much to discredit the word as any one person could do when, on hearing that somebody had denied an allegation, she made the deservedly famous reply, 'Well, he would, wouldn't he?' *Reject* would do well enough instead, but *refute* has the bonus of profitable equivocation. I first heard it misused in a radio news item about Harold Wilson, of all people: 'Mr Wilson today refuted claims that the Government's figures about so-and-so were misleading.' I waited for the evidence on which this refutation rested to be imparted, or at least indicated, but it never came.

In ordinary prose, any ambiguities are usually cleared up straight away by reference to the immediate context. My final example shows that this is not always so.

> Mr Eric Heffer has lately written a persuasive article in the NEW STATESMAN *refuting* the view that Marxism is, by its nature, authoritarian. [Ronald Butt in *The Times*.]

Such a refutation would be well worth notice, but you have to read on for another couple of hundred words before you come to

> This begs the essential question. Mr Heffer asserts . . . but he has not produced the slightest evidence . . . [another 200 words later] Mr Heffer gives no evidence, except to assert . . .

and you realise that Mr Butt never thought Mr Heffer had done anything more than *try*, and try in vain, to refute the view at issue. On such points it's important not to seem to take the will for the deed.

I saw no letters of remonstrance in the paper afterwards. Let there be no such silence the next time somebody refutes a proposition by stating its opposite. And don't spare the jeers.

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London Diary

☐ Strange, isn't it, how we always seem to see to it in Britain that major constitutional changes slip in, as it were, by sleight of hand. The government committee of inquiry on state aid for political parties has now been sitting for some six months; and from all I hear it is likely to come out in the summer with at least a majority recommendation in favour of Exchequer subsidies for political parties. The main weight of support for the idea comes from the Left rather than the Right – which is why I was delighted to see two *Tribune* Group MPs (Norman Buchan and Eric Heffer) denouncing the whole notion root-and-branch in a letter to the committee's chairman, Lord Houghton. One other politician who can be counted on robustly to oppose any such further step down the road to the corporate state is, curiously enough, Ted Heath. He's quite clear in his mind that, at least in the Tory Party, any subsidy from the state would act as a kind of anaesthetic on all voluntary effort. Wouldn't the same go for the Labour Party? Admittedly, Labour constituencies are more used to the notion of outside subventions; but safe Labour seats with trade union-sponsored MPs are seldom advertisements for grass-roots democracy. Incidentally, there are no MPs on Lord Houghton's committee. That seems an incongruous omission – but may well serve as a guarantee that, when its report eventually comes out, it will get what it deserves: some pretty sceptical scrutiny on the floor of the House.

☐ From the Prime Minister's speech at the Liverpool Press Club last Friday it looks as if we're going to get a law of privacy after all. If so, it will represent a major triumph for Alex Lyon, the unassuming and underestimated Minister of State at the Home Office. He's fought a lonely battle for such an addition to the statute book ever since he was a member of the Younger Committee on Privacy in 1970-72. In his minority report he told a story that has always seemed to me unanswerable:

> Early in my researches I came across the case of a Mrs X whose policeman husband took a mistress. The wife prevailed upon him to give up the mistress and they were reconciled. The jealous lover told a national newspaper. When their reporter was rebuffed by Mrs X, they printed the story under the headline 'The Love Life of a Detective'. The family had to move; the husband had to give up his job; the child was teased at school. What do I now tell Mrs X? That truth must prevail?

Certainly that is what Mr Lyon would still have to say at the moment – and that can't be right. But nor can it be right that a T. Dan Smith, for example, should be able to call in aid the civil courts in order to inhibit any newspaper or television investigations into his business or even personal dealings. How then is the Government going to draw the line? I hope the Attorney-General will cast his eyes across the Atlantic and adopt the principle in *Sullivan* v *New York Times* (which made it virtually impossible for 'public officials' in the US to sue for libel) into any new law of privacy he produces. No one, after all, *required* Mr T. Dan Smith – or, for that matter, Mr Wilson or Mr Thorpe – to go into public life. Why should they, as public men, automatically be entitled to the same protection under the law as a private individual like 'Mrs X'?

☐ The NCCL report on sexual offences (their evidence to the Criminal Law Revision Committee) is so tolerant that it is certain to irritate the Festival of Light brigade beyond words – not, that is, that they are often at a loss for words. It is, however, very carefully drafted, particularly over the age of consent (not under ten in any circumstances, but otherwise lowered to 14). But what is likely to be thought most shocking is the Council's humane attitude towards incest, particularly between brother and sister. I was reminded of the case last year when a half-brother and sister, who had a baby, were ordered never to meet again during their entire lives, without a third person present. However strong the taboos, only the cruellest of moralists could, surely, have found that anything but a tragic story.

☐ At least there was a fortnight between Gore Vidal leaving London and William F. Buckley Jr arriving – which was probably just as well considering that the relationship between the two might best be described as 'barbed'. Each, however, got almost the identical media 'celebrity' treatment – and, as native-born citizens of the global village, took to it with roughly equal assurance and aplomb. If anything, Buckley could probably claim the edge in exposure since, as well as appearing all over the place on British television, he produced while over here for 48 hours no fewer than four of his *Firing Line* programmes for American consumption back home. I went on one of them on Tuesday and was as fascinated as ever by the way in which – with a lifted eyebrow here, a raised inflection there – he caresses the camera and fondles the lens. I've always been slightly suspicious of Malcolm Muggeridge's thesis about television serving the same purpose for its habitual performers as the pool fulfilled for Narcissus: but having watched Buckley twice on Tuesday evening (once behind the screen and once actually on it) let's just say that I'm slightly less resistant to it than I was.

☐ For people who, presumably, once made their living out of journalism the top brass of the National Union of Journalists have an uncanny knack of getting themselves a bad press. Last year, as Michael Foot was arguing that his Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill would not curtail the freedom of the press, the union ADM promptly made a fool of itself – and him – by voting, against the NEC's advice, to force editors to toe the union line. It took an expensive special delegate meeting and a national ballot to overturn this silly and unrepresentative move. Now it is the NEC's turn to throw a spanner in the works: it has given its official backing to the Barnsley branch's illiberal and ham-handed attempt to persuade the local Labour council and trade unions not to cooperate with four staff members of the *Barnsley Chronicle* who left the NUJ, disgruntled, to join the much smaller Institute of Journalists. I happen to believe that the IoJ, more of a senior executives' association than a trade union, is a barrier to the proper unionisation of the journalistic trade. Hardly, however, as hefty a hurdle as this kind of vindictive bullying on the part of the Barnsley branch. I'm relieved to see that the Union's general purposes committee has now invited the full NEC to reconsider the backing it originally gave to it. I hope it will.

☐ Naturally, the Chinese stole the show at the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition, as they had fully intended. So one irony passed, I think, unnoticed. As the pound fell through the floor, a brochure from the Gas Board arrived through the letter-box, advertising their wares. Brochure? Well, 14 separate items, most of them glossy, in a smart folder: the first one I glanced at began: 'Economy is the keynote of the British Gas Pavilion at this year's Ideal Home Exhibition.' I shall remember that when my next bill arrives.

☐ I gather the BBC narrowly escaped being dragged through the gutters of Fleet Street on Friday night, when its political editor David Holmes was questioned by a couple of *Express*men as to why he had paid £2,500 to Norman Scott, on the eve of the February 1974 election. In vain did Mr Holmes protest, on the doorstep of his Swiss Cottage house, that he'd never had £2,500 to give away. Fortunately, and in the nick of time, the real Mr Holmes stood up.

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ 'It taught me such a lot being at Harrow,' he said. 'You meet such a cross-section of society there.' – Anthony Nelson MP, quoted in *News of the World*. (H. Wilshaw)

☐ In the last year Caines has been twice to Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt, and once to Lebanon for trade talks. 'I don't speak Arabic. The people we deal with almost without exception speak excellent English. I think it's a great mistake to try to negotiate in a foreign language.' – *Observer* (R. E. Brammah)

☐ Church authorities are planning to buy a £39,000, four-bedroomed house for the Bishop of Woolwich and his successors. Earlier plans to buy a £47,000 six-bedroom house were attacked by local clergy who thought that the bishop, a bachelor, should live in more modest surroundings. – *Guardian* (Roger A. L. Abbiss)

☐ A large crowd gathered outside Hammersmith's Labour Party's office before last night's meeting. At one stage, one of them shouted: 'This is a victory for democracy.' Mr Tomney replied: 'You keep your mouth shut.' – *Daily Mail* (P. Stubbs)

☐ Studio TC6 is to have its new colour cameras as planned but a saving of £150,000 is to be achieved by not paying for them until April 1977. – *BBC Staff Journal* (A. H. Chatterley)

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John Anderson

Are You Outers or What?

'I see *The Times* letters page is engaged in another fascinating controversy about pornography,' I said to Fat Harry as he came stumbling down the steps at the club one morning. But we didn't have the time, just then, to join in the national debate on this burning topic because after him came the first furtive-eyed punter of the day. Instead I turned the knob on the side of the projector and *Schoolgirl Spanking Frolics* whirred into action on the screen. Fat Harry and I were pornographers, a class of people not given to airing their views publicly, except possibly in court.

Nor is it odd that pornographers don't usually write letters to *The Times* defending their calling. The ones that I met, in my time in the business, never had a voice in society. They were working-class rebels, East Enders mainly, outlaws with none of the glamour possessed by more privileged social rebels. What seemed exciting to me for a time – being on the shady side of the law – was a natural existence to them. I think I was the only one of my work mates who didn't have 'previous' (criminal convictions). I know that in their eyes I've proved myself a wrong 'un. I've 'bottled out'. Which simply means that, in East End terms, I'm a coward.

I drifted into porno in the following way. I had thrown up a 'promising' copywriting job and was living on the dole in gentrified North London. I was renting a room in a house owned by a Lady. As far as I was concerned she was a Lady only in the sense that she was married to a Lord. She had forbidden me, on pain of eviction. from 'declaring' my rent – and thus claiming it from Social Security. Milady was fiddling her income tax. Consequently I was months behind with the rent and hence, shades of *Catch 22*, about to be evicted. Then the fates intervened. At a party I met a pornographer and offered to write him a blue movie script. He was of smallish height, about 30, with an elfish, urchin face and wearing a well-cut whistle (whistle and flute = suit). And, to my surprise, he took me on.

I spent the next week putting on paper all my most outrageous sexual fantasies linked to a tenuous plot about some randy girls in an elegant finishing school. I have always harboured revengeful designs on the daughters of the upper classes and I found writing the script therapeutic.

By the time I had finished it and taken it round to Jimmy (and I call him that only because it is not his real name) I was, of course, thoroughly depraved and corrupted. Not by the smut but by the money. The lure of easy money is surely the most depraving and corrupting influence in society. There is a judicial ruling to the effect that policemen, who are exposed to pornography in the course of their duties, cannot be depraved and corrupted by it. But almost the entire CID Obscene Publications Squad was suspended, or resigned from duty, when investigations were made into allegations of bribery resulting from its dealings with pornographers. Twelve detectives including Alfred Moody, the ex-head of the squad, were recently charged with conspiring corruptly to receive monies . . . from persons trading in pornography.

So I asked Jimmy for a job in a blue movie club. He gave me a searching look. 'Are you outers or what?' he asked. 'Outers', I was to learn, is East End for broke. 'I can put you into a club,' he continued. 'It's very boring work but I pay well. Well, gotta, you know. 'Cos if you pay peanuts you get monkeys.'

Jimmy bought me a suit because he disapproved of my scruffy dress and I went to work as a projectionist. Once I'd learnt the lingo, the other workers there accepted me as one of their own. I was 'on the firm'. The job, as Jimmy had promised, was boring but easy. Every 15 minutes I swapped films on the projector. When I felt like it I went into the darkened auditorium and swept my torch beam over the punters' laps to make sure none of them was masturbating. Not that we cared if they wanked themselves blind; only, if they were caught at it when the Old Bill (police) staged one of their frequent raids then we would all be up on a charge of 'maintaining a disorderly house'. This is a curious law, dating from 1751, which makes it an offence to 'outrage public decency' by allowing 'the lower sort of people . . . to spend their small substance in riotous pleasures . . . in such places of common resort'. Actually the punters (or 'consumers' as they are called by straight citizens), far from being 'the lower sort', are mainly middle-aged, middle-class males. And the atmosphere inside the cinema, as these respectable ratepayers watched people half their age enthusiastically having sex with each other, was one of reverence rather than 'riotous pleasure'.

So I just sat there bored out of my skull most of the day. Once you've seen half-a-dozen blue movies you've seen them all, largely because they are made with such total lack of imagination. I amused myself by reading the blurbs on the boxes in which the films come from Denmark. Here is one that Monty Python couldn't better: 'While the delivery man from the department store goes about hanging the ordered picture, the young and pretty housewife with the enormous tits attracts his attention more than the job in hand.'

I had other sources of distraction. I got to know a girl, Julie, who lived two doors away and I often went up there and got myself blocked on grass. There was an ironic twist here. Jimmy, the boss, didn't mind this but would dismiss on the spot anyone whom he caught drinking alcohol in working hours. I suppose everyone has their own definition of precisely what it is that depraves and corrupts others.

Meanwhile at the club I was becoming increasingly paranoid. A member of the 'Dirty Squad' (one of those who were, in their turn, nicked for bribery and corruption recently) had been bribed, it was alleged on the porno grapevine, by one of the big barons to put us out of business by nicking the entire firm and confiscating all our gear. Porno merchants, like other businessmen, tend to favour monopoly capitalism. If the rumour was true then the bent 'filth' (member of the CID in criminal parlance) had done his master's bidding very well because the boss had been charged on 30 counts of offending the obscenity laws. The rest of us were just waiting for our turn to come.

One afternoon I came out of Julie's flat to see a police panda car parked across the road from the club, like a big cat ready to pounce on some frolicsome mice. The police were obviously inside the club busily nicking all the employees.

I finally surfaced in a refuse-strewn yard, dry-mouthed with fear, my chest heaving with huge, racking gasps for air. 'As pants the hart for cooling streams', I remember thinking irrelevantly, a line straight out of

Roger Woddis

New Lines for Althea

(After Richard Lovelace)

An editorial in the journal of the Association of Magisterial Officers suggests that prison should be made so unpleasant, even if it means Russian-type labour camps, that nobody will risk it.

When I was done for stealing things
  And ended up inside,
The law was keen to clip my wings,
  Though not to flay my hide;
But now I see how soft they were
  And gentle with the stick,
Tough treatment is what I prefer
  When I am in the nick.

The screws who run the Queen's Hotel
  Are kinder than they seem,
With willing birds in every cell
  And coffee topped with cream;
With butter fresh from Normandy,
  Instead of bread and scrape,
I am not frantic to be free,
  Nor hanker to escape.

The thin blue line is stretched quite thin,
  The crime-rate rising fast;
I ponder, as I sip my gin,
  This is too good to last.
The tenets of the AMO
  Are nailed upon the door:
A Gulag Archipelago
  From Parkhurst to the Moor.

Soft beds do not a prison make,
  Nor licensed bars a cage;
The rack and burning at the stake
  Befit the modern age:
The porridge in my breakfast bowl,
  The early morning tea,
Will not redeem my worthless soul,
  Nor make a man of me.

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my public school past. And what, I asked myself, do you think you are doing here, sobbing amid the over-flowing dustbins?

I found an open gate and set about making good my escape. I noticed I was on the 14 bus route because there was one pulling away from a bus stop. Summoning up desperate reserves of energy, I ran for it and just managed to jump on. And there in front of the bus was the Black Maria.

Since then I've gone straight. All my old mates received suspended sentences at the Old Bailey. Yet I still feel guilty of cowardice for not being there when the Old Bill finally arrived. And I must confess to readers of *The Times*, the NEW STATESMAN and anyone else that, far from feeling depraved and corrupted, my reaction to a prolonged exposure to pornography ranged solely from amusement to boredom.

First Person

Arthur Marshall

Exit Smiling

Students of the theatre, and in particular students of dramatists' actual texts, must often have wondered at the varying extent to which playwrights consider it important to guide their actors with helpful indications as to how their lines should be said, coupled with the provision of bits of stage 'business' which the director may or may not use. Some authors provide rather too much guidance, and some rather too little.

One of the former, and at this late stage the criticism will hardly damage his rightly splendid reputation, is Priestley. Never having acted professionally himself, he possibly felt that actors welcome having every indication of mood spelt out for them. In *Dangerous Corner* the dialogue is thickly strewn with explanatory adverbs snugly bracketed: playfully, harshly, sardonically, grimly, sharply, thoughtfully, coldly, briskly, wearily, excitedly, bravely, urgently, mockingly, steadily, emphatically, significantly, and so on, with over 150 in all and including 'half screaming' and 'making a face', which is doubtless what reputable, experienced, resentful actors with ideas of their own would by now be doing.

In *The Sacred Flame*, a similar sort of play with its startling revelations within a close-knit circle, Maugham, very much not an actor either, is more tactful. There is an occasional 'listlessly', 'sullenly', 'kindly' and 'shyly', but on the whole he leaves the performers to get on with it as best they may. And Galsworthy too, in *Loyalties*, knows when to intrude and when to keep mum. Shaw, in all his plays, behaves impeccably to actors, but then he was one himself, of a sort.

For self-indulgence in this field, Barrie would be hard to beat. The pages drip, alas, with his slobbery enjoyments. But he can be disarmingly honest. During one of the first rehearsals of *Peter Pan* in 1904, he tells us, he became aware of an overalled theatre employee standing at his side in the stalls, gloomily watching what was going on (Wendy sewing on Peter's shadow). Eventually he turned to Barrie and said glumly: 'The gallery won't stand this, you know.' For this one can forgive Barrie much, and there is indeed much to forgive.

It was just as well that some of the stage directions were not read out to the Gods. When, in that top-floor nursery, Mr Darling is trying to cajole Nans, the canine nanny, she 'plays rub-a-dub with her paws, which is how a dog blushes'. Meanwhile Michael is in bed 'doing idiotic things with a teddy-bear', while Wendy enlivens her other brother, John, 'by playing rum-tum on him in bed', these activities being watched by Mrs Darling, 'the loveliest lady in Bloomsbury', about to 'tidy up the children's minds as if they were drawers', light the nightlights and exit gracefully with a tuneful lullaby.

In the theatre, the play works like magic, despite the perilous moments. Among the friendly redskins we find Tiger Lily, 'the belle of the Piccaninny tribe' ('Scalp um, oho, velly quick'), and her braves ('Ugh, ugh, wah'). There are mermaids ('going plop-plop'). The Never Land boys drink, we are told, 'calabashes of poe-poe' and Nibs sneaks on Slightly ('He hasn't drunk his poe-poe'). Wendy, wanting a kiss, 'holds out her mouth to Peter', not sure whether she is his wife, mother or sister. Later on, she tries again: 'Oh, Peter, how I wish I could take you up and squdge you! *He draws back*'. And there is the memorable moment when Wendy explains to her mother about fairies:

'The mauve fairies are boys and the white ones are girls and there are some colours who don't know *what* they are.' Well I never.

Ibsen often supplies, when it matters most, the really telling stage direction. The curtain has not been up two seconds on the first scene of *A Doll's House* (*Et dukkehjem* in the original) when Nora ('Slam that door!') Helmer comes in, fresh from a shopping expedition. 'Nora enters smiling. She continues smiling in quiet glee, takes from her pocket a bag of macaroons and eats one or two', every inch the healthy, hungry, open, extravert, early women's libber. And when, in *Ghosts* (*Gengangere*), the Alving orphanage catches fire at the end of Act Two (such a challenge for the stage-manager), saintly Pastor Manders, first showing his practical, Norwegian side, utters the immortal line 'and not insured either!' Then, Ibsen tells us, he 'clasps his hands', either invoking immediate fire-fighting aid from Above in the shape of a sharp shower, or in silent prayer that diseased Oswald has, during one of his increasingly few lucid moments, been inspired to take out an all-risks policy with the Prudential, the risks to include the likelihood of being poisoned by his mother. No such luck, however (the policy, I mean).

Apart from the well-known and mysterious 'Exit, pursued by a bear', Shakespeare deals only in absolute essentials. It was clearly quite enough trouble to get the actual spoken words down on probably indifferent parchment with a scratchy quill without bothering about mere frills. During the closest scene, Gertrude was almost certainly applying soothing skin creams to neck and shoulders and dabbing on anti-wrinkle unguents where they would do most good, while Hamlet moodily kicked at logs in the fireplace, ruining his sandals, but we have to guess at these things. Just that little bit extra and our understanding of, for example, the home life of the Macbeths would benefit enormously.

Take that 'night to remember' at Inverness. Duncan had, we know, 'supp'd', possibly on smoked salmon, roast venison, an open medlar tart and *les fromages*, and was now, for the time being anyway, safely tucked up and in dreamland. We can assume that his hostess, her mind elsewhere, had merely pecked at her food. Who can doubt that at some point Lady Macbeth indulged in a light but sustaining snack to help her through the rest of what was going to be an unusually busy evening?

Lady Macbeth enters hurriedly bearing a heaped platter of baps. With feverish haste, she butters them, spreads them liberally with wild honey, and falls to voraciously.

Lady M: (*her mouth full*). *Wog ter ish?*

Macbeth: (*crossly*) I cannot *hear* you, Elspeth.

Lady M: I said, what time is it?

Macbeth: That's better. Twenty past ten.

Lady M: Remind me to congratulate Maggie in the morning. These baps are tip-top.

Lady Macbeth finishes the last one, licks her fingers with a little sigh of repletion and adjusts her wimple.

You see? Just a few additions and at once we get a fuller, rounder, more human picture of what is, after all, just an ordinary, everyday Scottish family.

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Letters to the Editor

The Politics of Abortion

Sir, Since you rightly comment in your abortion editorial (NS 5 March) that I am not a silent MP, I would have thought it possible for you to attempt to rest your argument upon documented public statements that I have made rather than attribute to me 'private' conversations (with whom, when, where and in what context?) upon which you curiously claim to have eavesdropped.

Upon such foundations your editorial advances six ill-founded contentions: that those who have supported the reappointment of the Select Committee are necessarily reactionaries, that abortion is now a party-political issue, that the dynamic behind the criticism of the workings of the Abortion Act is international Catholicism, that the Select Committee lacks balance, that abortion is safer than taking the pill, that the refusal by the pro-abortion lobby to submit evidence to the Select Committee is a socialist stance.

May I briefly comment on these propositions:

(1) Politically, as biologically, nothing is more reactionary than turning life into death. Our goal should surely be to create a society where every child, particularly those born to unmarried mothers or poor parents, should be happily received. And if in an imperfect world this is not possible, our task is not to incite avoidance by proffering the scalpel to women in trouble, but the mobilisation of social resources to ensure that, by supportive help, abortion is the last grim option not the first.

(2) With the Prime Minister, the deputy leader, two women ministers and 104 Labour MPs, together with Scots Nats, Plaid Cymru and Liberal MPs all voting for the reappointment of the Select Committee, it is fantasy not fact to suggest that the issue has become a party one. Despite the efforts of some Labour MPs believing in abortion on demand to make it a party issue, the Parliamentary Party has, of course, sternly rejected such intolerant advice: and as Transport House well knows, if it were otherwise the price could be the loss of so many seats that Labour could lose at the next election.

(3) It is not Catholics but MPs who are members of the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland, or Nonconformist movements who have been prime initiators of the demand to review the operation of the Abortion Act. For myself, I am godless and do not believe in the after-life. My hope for immortality is in my deeds and my children; and because I hold we only have one life, I do not underestimate its importance. You do an injustice to humanists to suggest Catholics hold a monopoly as defenders of the principle of the sanctity of life. On the international front, it is the communist East European states who are now most vigorous opponents of easy abortion. They are recoiling, in the light of the chastening physical and psychological sequellae following the wide-scale abortions in those countries, from the errors of their former views.

(4) The Select Committee lacks balance only in the sense that it does not reflect the overwhelming vote given for its reappointment by the Commons: but I know of no one who objected either to the fact that a disproportionate number of abortion on demand MPs were appointed or that the committee should include four women members. My personal view is that the particular qualification for this committee should be parenthood. Those who have the experience of children do not lightly wish, by surgery, to repudiate the blessings they bring: although the sensitive non-parent certainly has the capacity to empathise with the pregnant, it is strikingly noticeable that some of the most strident of women campaigning for abortion on demand retell the story of the fox without a tail in every speech they make.

(5) The safety or hazard of abortion, and of various methods of abortion, is precisely the evaluation the House will expect the Select Committee, with the aid of expert evidence, to make. Indeed, the mounting evidence of the incidence of subsequent sterility after abortion of first-time pregnancy, with all the tragic consequences entailed, underlies the importance of the continuation of the Select Committee's work.

(6) Your view, albeit expressed with qualms, that to strive to undermine the working of our parliamentary system by defying majority votes, and refusing to submit evidence to an appointed Select Committee, is a socialist approach does not correspond to the view I hold as a social democrat. In the 'reactionary' campaigns of my parliamentary life which have contributed to changes in the suicide, illegitimacy, adoption, divorce, family planning and homosexual laws of this country, I often encountered setbacks; but neither I nor my allies quit the field and mocked Parliament. Your condonation of an attempt to sabotage the parliamentary process is unworthy of the traditions of your journal.

LEO ABSE

House of Commons

Sir, You are absolutely right (NS 5 March). Conservatives are now voting almost solidly in favour of uprooting the 1967 Act. In the debate on the reappointment of the Select Committee on James White's Bill, the Conservative voting was: for 186; against 15. By contrast, on the Labour side, notwithstanding Barbara Castle's declaration at the preceding Parliamentary Labour Party meeting that the useful work of the Select Committee had been completed last session and that she would oppose it, 151 Labour MPs voted with her and 116 with the Tories.

Too many Labour Members perhaps overlooked the terms of resolutions both of the Labour Party conference and the Trades Union Congress last year opposing any attack on the principles of the 1967 Abortion Act. Anti-abortion speeches in the debate on 9 February showed clearly enough that many who wanted the Select Committee to continue were looking for some firm reactionary stuff at the end of the day. It was not a bit surprising that six members of the Select Committee (four Labour, including three women; one Conservative and one Liberal) resigned from the committee soon afterwards. They did so on the grounds that the majority was, as you say, out to destroy the essentials of the 1967 Act. This is what both the Party conference and the TUC said they would oppose.

The six vacancies have not been filled. The truncated committee is carrying on as if nothing had happened. It comprises, apart from the chairman, three Labour (one Roman Catholic) and five Conservatives (two Roman Catholics). Small wonder that a growing number of organisations which defend the 1967 Act are boycotting what remains of the Select Committee, which has no claim whatsoever to their confidence.

You say that 'since abortion has become a political issue there is no reason why it should not be handled in a socialist way'. The 'socialist way' is the secular way, which is to make abortion a matter of social policy and not one of doctrine. It is not socially right, and therefore not socialist either, to condemn women (and women alone) to misery and despair for a debatable issue of doctrine.

DOUGLAS HOUGHTON

110 Marsham Court
London SW1

Sir, Lucky I keep file copies of my reviews, to guard against the misrepresentation and innuendo contained in Ms Denney's carefully selective quotations (Letters 5 March). I will repeat here only those points from my review that are relevant to the abortion debate under discussion:

(1) Now that it is possible to predict mongolism and some other grave conditions, a woman who *deliberately* chooses to continue with a high-risk pregnancy is, in my view, acting in a morally irresponsible way.

(2) I do not believe that whatever I and my friends happen to regard as morally irresponsible should be made illegal by Act of Parliament. After all, we could be wrong.

(3) This is where Roman Catholics disagree with us. They regard abortion as morally irresponsible. They therefore think it ought to be made illegal by Act of Parliament. They do not believe they could *possibly* be wrong.

(4) They have to rely on force and compulsion because they have not even succeeded in persuading their own co-religionists of the moral infallibility of their views on this issue. How then can they hope to persuade members of other sects? If there is any doubt about this I suggest Ms Denney reads the report of the Lane Committee on Abortion (Volume III, page 35):

> Despite the opposition of the Catholic Church to abortion, the proportion of Catholics among women having abortions does not seem to be much lower than that among fertile women in general. As with contraception many women may be rejecting their Church's teaching in this field.

MADELEINE SIMMS

17 Dunstan Road
London NW11

Is This Socialism?

Sir, Mr Wareing's reference to British capitalism as 'the economic and political regime which, spurred on by Sir Keith's market philosophy, enslaved millions' is bad history. The burgeoning of the market economy in this country brought not only technical progress but also greater political freedom, economic and social welfare for the people. Marx was the first to give it credit. Change can certainly be for the worse as for the better. Socialism as applied in Mr Wareing's spiritual homes has been a regression in terms of liberty and well-being.

It is a familiar ploy to designate certain regimes as fascist and then denounce anyone who denies this for 'white-washing' fascism. I argued that Horthy's regime, whatever its shortcomings, was not fascist in any rational use of the term. I recalled that it had a legal social democratic party represented in parliament and free trade unions. Does Mr Wareing suggest that they could co-exist with fascism? If so, what does he mean by fascism, except anti-communism? In the 1930s, the communists classed the social democrats as fascists. Does Mr Wareing concur?

Mr Wareing oversimplifies Hungarian history. Horthy did not willingly hand over Jews. Gideon Hausner, Israeli Attorney-General at the time of the Eichmann trial, wrote in *Justice in Jerusalem*: 'Hungary was the only country within the German sphere of influence where great numbers of Jews lived in comparative safety.' In 1943/4 Hitler imposed collaboration

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on this hitherto awkward neutral power – and the Hungarian holocaust began.

I do not need Mr Wareing to remind me of the 'evil nature of Hitler's friends'. Most of my generation went to fight at a time when many of the extreme Left – and not only card-carrying communists either – welcomed the Nazi-Soviet Pact and denounced our war as imperialist. My main point remains that the regimes at present imposed in the Soviet bloc are worse than their predecessors, in many cases much worse; otherwise why do they need dictatorships?

As for China, how can Mr Wareing decide what the Chinese people want? He might observe that Hong Kong's population has actually multiplied several times over by refugees from the mainland – in spite of the difficulties of escaping from the communist paradise. The rest I shall leave Mr Wareing to learn when de-Maoification proceeds after Mao's departure from the scene.

So much for Mr Wareing's apologetics for communist despotism. I should, indeed, be interested in details of the Liverpool Labour Party's protestations against communist inhumanity. When did these protests begin – with the mass-murders of the 1930s? The anti-semitic persecutions which gathered momentum from 1939 onwards? The mass-murders of the Chinese cultural revolution?

The main question remains – as Mr Eden wrote last week – how can a society where the state monopolises the means of employment, consumption and information conceivably preserve freedom for the individual?

KEITH JOSEPH

House of Commons

Sir, Douglas Eden's letter (NS 5 March) is an example of twisting one's views to fit into a preconceived concept. Obviously to Eden I am a 'Marxist non-democrat', and no matter what I do, say or write (rather like the attitude adopted by the *Daily Telegraph* towards me), I must retain the public image as created by them.

Just one or two examples: e.g. the dictatorship of the proletariat. I pointed out that this concept, which had originated as the result of the Paris Commune, had been transformed into the dictatorship *over* the proletariat. That point Eden ignores. He further says that as an NEC member no doubt I support the NEC's decision to establish fraternal relations with the CPs of East Germany and Rumania. As I have been on the NEC only since October of last year, and as the question of relationships with CPs has only come up once since I have been on it, Eden is simply being snide. Perhaps he should address the same question to Shirley Williams, Harold Wilson, Ted Short, James Callaghan, Fred Mulley, Brian Stanley etc., all of whom have been on the NEC much longer than I have.

No one to my knowledge is trying to pervert the Labour Party into a vehicle for Marxism (the language used is in itself significant!), but surely Marxism has as much right to be heard in the Labour Party as any other trend. It is very clear that Mr Eden, like so many of his political friends, simply wants a system of thought control which is precisely in line with the Stalinism or dogmatism that I oppose.

ERIC HEFFER

House of Commons

Power to the Persons

Sir, Jill Craigie's letter (NS February 27) does not suggest that she will be a rigorously objective historian of the Suffragette movement. It may well be that some of the most interesting documents only recently came into her possession. But having been informed in 1965 that she was at work on a study of the militant campaign, with help from the Suffragette Fellowship, I find it a little hard to believe that she had to wait nearly a decade before acquiring new material of any real value. On Mrs Pankhurst's character, it may be salutary to recall that Ethel Smythe, who knew Emmeline well, expected her to rise from the grave and 'give the speaker one of her storms' when the Rev. Hugh Chapman preached the flowery funeral sermon about her 'spiritual nobility' and 'winsome holiness'. I leave it to the authors involved (should any of them be so inclined) to comment on Jill Craigie's description of their books as 'wildly inaccurate'.

DAVID MITCHELL

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London SE26

Rail Cuts

Sir, Just one comment on 'A Puff of Cigar Smoke' in your issue of 13 February. As we have repeatedly said in public, we have no plans to strip rail services from Scotland, Wales and Cornwall and have been at considerable pains to make it clear that we do not share the views of the trade unions about the possibility of the railway being reduced to a network of some 4,000 miles.

DAVID BOWICK
Chief Executive (Railways)

British Railways Board
222 Marylebone Road
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Musical Chairs

Sir, Bayan Northcott's friendly blunderbuss was too shakily aimed for his slugs to draw much blood from Radio 3's flesh (NS 23 February). Attacks on well-loved insitutions are generally more attention-provoking than effective. Between four and five million people listen at least once a week to Radio 3, and judging by our very careful daily audience surveys overwhelmingly like what they hear. They are unlikely to write to the *Listener* to say so. Why should they? Success, in my view, is at present more deeply distrusted by journalists than failure, and BBC shortcomings, real or supposed, provide better copy for freelance journalists than enthusiastic endorsements.

Sir Charles Curran did not announce that 'Radios 3 and 4 will shortly have to combine for two hours a day as part of the BBC's £10m. economies'. He listed this contingency plan as a possibility. Since he spoke, the BBC has decided to save money in different ways and Radios 3 and 4 will carry on with their separate Monday to Friday daytime transmissions. Had he not taken the public into his confidence before those vital economy decisions were made, the BBC would have been accused of secretiveness. Having spelled out some options, he has been misinterpreted by Mr Northcott.

The reasons for the editorial independence of our Gramophone Department from the Music Division are not at all inscrutable. When the majority of programmes transmitted on a national network are offered by a single output department there is much to be said for a different editorial stance to express itself. This applies not only to music but also to poetry, features, talks, documentaries – many of these programmes, both on radio and television, are produced by different departments and reach the public air sharpened by internal competition.

The same work does *not* occasionally get billed five times in a fortnight. There are only four of us planning the schedules and we can tell within 60 seconds when a given work was last heard. Sometimes we deliberately plan for purposes of interpretative comparison but we aim to keep major works at least ten days apart. (For instance, the record for symphonic performances in 1974 was held by Brahms' Fourth Symphony, which was heard 15 times).

Nevertheless, it is not Monsieur Pangloss who is writing to you. Democracy and artistic excellence are not articulated by the same value judgements. The democracy of the licence fee requires of public service broadcasting as *one* of its duties that those who pay should get what is in their opinion their broadcasting money's worth. In much of this kind of broadcasting there is very often excellence, but in most matters of art the demanding, the new, the daring and the unfamiliar need enthusiastic and convinced fostering. What the few appreciate today, the many may come to love tomorrow. Majorities and minorities are constantly changing. Majority programmes thus protect minority programmes and as long as the BBC continues to exist it will safeguard minority interests and programmes. There is simply no possibility of an 'all-day record programme of more or less popular classics' because the BBC would not want to entertain such a broadcasting concept. Critics like Bayan Northcott would serve their cause better by influencing public opinion in favour of more adequate broadcasting finance. What is the use of discussing broadcasting ends without even mentioning the means?

STEPHEN HEARST
Controller, Radio 3

Broadcasting House
London W1

Saint George

Sir, After some 40-odd years' membership of the Labour Party Lord George-Brown deserved something better from you than a few snide, self-righteous comments on the manner of his leave-taking. His emotional outburst on TV, which you claim embarrassed the nation, shows how out of touch you are with the average viewer who, I suspect, loved him for his outrageousness and his blazing sincerity.

I'd buy a second-hand car from him, any time!

JOAN KELLY

2 Apsley Close
North Harrow
Middlesex

Accident Man

Sir, Unlike Peter Jenkins (whose statesmanlike opinions aren't quoted at all) I was rather gratified to see myself quoted in Richard Reeves's biography of President Ford, and am troubled by Mr Jenkins's description of it as a 'typically snide and silly remark'.

The quotation – that 'no one is attracted to a political career in the first place unless he is socially or emotionally crippled' – came from a NEW STATESMAN article where I was dealing with other subjects. But Mr Jenkins's angry reaction prompts me to add a rider – that no political journalist of reasonable intelligence can fail to notice this obvious truth unless he, too, is attracted to a political career.

AUBERON WAUGH

Combe Florey House
Combe Florey
Taunton, Somerset

Last Word

Sir, I am glad to see that Crucifer (NS 5 March) does not look for an answer to his latest hypothetical question.

To conclude, it would seem only fair that in our next correspondence he might write the letters and I might write the footnotes.

KENNETH LAMB
Director, Public Affairs

BBC
Broadcasting House
London W1

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The key to future prosperity.

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"...and what a man has earned he must spend wisely."

Operating profit, before taxation and special items, of Lloyds Bank Limited and its subsidiaries for the year ended 31 December 1975 was £96,026,000, compared with £117,998,000 in 1974. After accounting for the share of losses of associated companies, and because there was no need for special provisions, Group operating profit was £95,505,000, 27 per cent higher than 1974.

The recommended final dividend of 4·0203p per share will make a total distribution for the year equivalent, with the related tax credit, to 11·3804p per share gross (1974: 10·3459p), the maximum permitted.

Banking in Britain

The year 1975 has seen a very satisfactory increase in the number of both current and deposit account customers and good growth in balances.

As a result of the recession in the economy, total branch lendings have not greatly increased over the previous year. In view of present uncertainties, many companies have tended to maintain their liquidity and have made only modest use of their overdraft facilities.

Careful examination has been made of all our lending in the light of the economic climate, and provisions for doubtful debts have taken into account the extent of our participation, in conjunction with the Bank of England and other clearing banks, in advances made by the Support Group ('the lifeboat').

International

Lloyds Bank International made valuable progress during 1975 in its particular field of international banking, within the Bank's overall policy objectives and for the benefit of the Group as a whole.

1975 was not an easy year for banks in the United States but it is to be hoped that, under the influence of a gradually strengthening economy, conditions will become generally more favourable as 1976 progresses. *Lloyds Bank California* has faced these uncertainties well and, indeed, has emerged from 1975 with strength and a solid base upon which to build in the years ahead.

New Zealand did not escape the effects of the worldwide recession and generally high rates of inflation during the past year. However, in spite of rising costs and a squeeze on margins, *The National Bank of New Zealand* was able to maintain a useful volume of business activity and a satisfactory level of profitability.

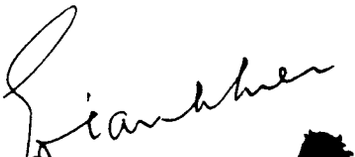
The Economy

Inflation constrains our policies and bars our hopes. In a time of recession, the human problems resulting from mounting unemployment are properly a matter of deep public concern. So, too, should be the frustrations of management and workers in firms working below capacity. The idleness of men and women and of capital resources adds nothing to the nation's wealth.

What then is the key both to survival and to future prosperity? Essentially it is the control of inflation. Inflation is not a plague inflicted upon us. Inflation is, as I said last year, man-made. The creation of man's materialism and self-indulgence, it can be controlled only by man's self-discipline, and by recognising the old truth that a man must earn before he spends, and that what he has earned he must spend wisely. Much the same applies to governments.

We all hope for a revival of the business of British industry in the next two years but, if it is to be able to obtain the funds it will need, and yet the money supply is to be contained, then the claims of government must be curtailed.

The defeat of inflation, then, can be achieved only by self-discipline on a national scale, and this demands the subordination of both personal gain and political advantage to the national need. It is encouraging that there are signs that at last the British people are beginning to recognise this.



Sir Eric Faulkner, MBE
Chairman

Lloyds Bank

Extracts from the Chairman's statement in the Report and Accounts of Lloyds Bank Limited for the year ended 31 December 1975. Copies are obtainable on request from the Secretary, 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BS.

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BOOKS & ARTS

Malcolm Bradbury

East of Eden

Steinbeck: A Life in Letters edited by ELAINE STEINBECK and ROBERT WALLSTEN *Heinemann* £8.00

John Steinbeck is, obviously and inescapably, one of the big figures in the modern American novel, which has had a taste for big figures. He is also, along with Thomas Wolfe, one of the more equivocal. Like Wolfe, he wrote on the large scale, and attempted to encompass multitudes, of people, of experiences; the sort of language you need to praise him is one that emphasises the qualities of grandeur, largeness and compassion – a discourse often needed for the American novel, but not one that comes trippingly off the tongue. The ambition runs high, and it carries you largely with it; then, usually, come the doubts. Steinbeck is still widely read; indeed, if the tastes of university applicants in literature are any guide, *The Grapes of Wrath* stands nowadays as the best-known American novel, far outrunning *Moby-Dick, Huck Finn, A Farewell to Arms* or *Catch-22*. But it is not always a lasting enthusiasm; a diet of Hemingway, Faulkner and Fitzgerald can quickly swamp it; most of the criticism written on Steinbeck is poor, and when he is seen in the tradition it is usually as an instance of Thirties social realism, which is the last thing his best-known books – the California novels and stories like *The Red Pony* and *Cannery Row*, above all that classic migration tale of the Okie shift through the depression Thirties to the California valleys – really are.

The Grapes of Wrath is indeed an epic narrative mural, the figures in it expressionistic and larger than life, the momentum mythical, the base of it all a biological evolutionism bred out of his fascination with marine biology and his theories of collective existence. When the publishers tried to get him to humanise the scene in *Grapes* where Rose of Sharon gives her breast to the starving man, he wrote back sharply:

> If there is a symbol, it is a survival symbol not a love symbol, it must be an accident, it must be a stranger, and it must be quick.

Books like this struggled painfully into existence, against Steinbeck's own doubts; he wrote fairly fluently, but always with anxiety, fearful of being on the wrong track, chasing the wrong ideas. He asked it to be put on record that he predicted failure for *The Grapes of Wrath*. He had begun writing against the odds, turning out massive bodies of work most of which were not published, in notable poverty and solitude; success, publicity and above all prosperity fazed him. His reviews were usually bad, but success did come with *Grapes of Wrath* which, appearing at the end of the Thirties, caught the backward mood of it all; and Steinbeck ended up with a reputation that culminated in 1962 with the award of the Nobel Prize. He doubted the success, and had profound trouble in repeating it, living for most of his very long writing life in a state of creative depression. But he was always energised by an almost biological passion for writing, a passion that was a cross between egotism and an abstract indifference; that is what dominates this book, which compiles letters from his early poor years in California to his death in 1968.

It is doubtless the best intimate record we shall have of him, and it is a dignified and powerful book. In one of these letters, he remarks that every writer has a symbol character who is the clue to the author: 'I suppose my own symbol character has been my dream wish of wisdom and acceptance.' Like many American writers, he saw writing both as a pursuit of technique and a transcendence of it; the ultimate fear was a loss of experience, a failure to intersect with life and contact present history, and over and over again he was anxious that he had lost this, gone wrong.

And indeed it is true that many of the later books are notably disappointing; he himself was disappointed. Yet his life, despite his insistent privacy, did intersect with the experience of his times and his generation at a great many points. In the Thirties, his biological determinism, based on an old American tradition, going back certainly to Dreiser (and, like Dreiser's, containing a strong element of the self-taught and the quirky) led him to theories of the human collective: the phalanx of man, in which individual enterprise is relatively unimportant. Later, in the Fifties, with the changing mood, it is the notion of creative individualism that reasserts itself. This was part of a political switch, though Steinbeck was never totally a political writer; he was close to Stevenson and Hammersköld, he sought to advise Roosevelt, Johnson and Kennedy; he supported and then reacted against the Vietnam war.

But the often confident tone of his public side hides a deep rhythm of personal unease, best exemplified, perhaps, in the great unfinished project of his later life, a modernisation of the *Morte d'Arthur*, which brought him to settle for a time in Somerset. It contains all the Steinbeck hallmarks: the search for the ultimate myth, rooted in the present, yet based in the past, the primary and eternal; the desire for an intellectual, even a scholarly base, yet generated from self-taught knowledge, won from proven experience. The publishers were not enthusiastic, and Steinbeck himself felt a loss of association with the contemporary history that he considered the writer's ultimate business; he saw the touch of nostalgia on which so much modern American writing is based, and he was pushed back into travelling across America (*Travels with Charlie*) to compensate. He knew that many American writers had succeeded best with their earlier work; but the passionate fight not to let this happen to him is apparent, and it is part of his dignity.

A writer with the edge of failure never far from his mind, Steinbeck was both ebullient and depressive, sexually active and sexless, engaging and destructive in his personal relationships: a difficult and a vital man. His life moved in difficult rhythms, perhaps best charted by his two marriage break-ups, each of which deeply changed the direction of his life and brought him from the early, obscure poverty and provincialism he began by valuing to the not unluxurious late days, which he represented as financially much more troubled than they were; poverty and the past kept virtuous overtones in his mind. His first marriage is the marriage of his poverty, and it ended on a personal and a historical turn: success with *The Grapes of Wrath*, the move of America into the war. His first wife is markedly, sexlessly out of sight in the early letters; she tends things, types, makes the best of the poverty which they celebrated with a cult of privacy, a refusal of publicity.

His second marriage, to a singer with a beautiful skin, took him to New York, which he had for so long avoided, into the public forum, the role of war correspondent, the political realm. The marriage was bitter in its later days, and collapsed at the end of the Forties; it left Steinbeck with a bleak misogynistic despair. For a writer who has been celebrated for his portraits of women, especially the energetic prostitutes of *Cannery Row* and the biological earth-mothers like Rose of Sharon, Steinbeck knew in his personal life a bitter side to American sexuality, an intrinsic cruelty in male-female relationships; his comments on these matters are among the most powerful in this book. The third marriage, he felt, released him from many of his earlier anxieties, the passion for suppressive self-containment, and he came the better to understand his own capacity for self-destruction.

Steinbeck was not a personal writer; but the sense of personal quest, and the commitment to his own creative energy, came out in what he wrote, and this book lets us see it better. He hovered uneasily between the popular and public forms and the private ones; the meeting ground was the desire for a realised philosophy, a quest that he might hand on into the future. He speaks here of having had a 'good, full,

Among this week's contributors:

MALCOLM BRADBURY is Professor of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia; his collection of short stories, *Who do You Think You Are?* is due out later this year.

TONY TANNER's *City of Words* has just appeared in paperback (Cape £2.25).

ELAINE FEINSTEIN's new novel, *The Ecstasy of Dr Miriam Garner*, is coming out in the spring; she is working on a biography of Marina Tsvetayeva.

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painful life' and that is precisely what comes out of the letters. They are self-engrossed, often deeply sad, frequently self-justifying, regularly naïve, and from time to time profoundly amusing, as when he comments on his stepdaughter's wedding: 'You can't imagine how many clothes you have to put on a girl when the sole purpose is to get them off.' His experience crosses with many of the central issues of the time as a writer in the American public eye might experience them: the involvements and the struggles with Hollywood, the trips to Russia, the claims of the Camelot White House around Kennedy. But this is also, and primarily, the record of a powerful private life; one puts it down with a valuable sense that Steinbeck embodied, in all its lights and larks, the struggle of the creative imagination for self-realisation that sometimes, in print, he too easily celebrated. The book, big in the American mould, is both revealing and well-presented: something decidedly better than the testamentary biographies that a good number of his rivals in American letters have earned.

John Raymond

Former Morrison Street

The Correspondence of G. E. Morrison Vol. I 1895-1912 edited by LO HUI-MIN *Cambridge* £25.00

A quarter of a century ago I was a young man of ineffectual but limitless ambition, the theatre under my statutory black homburg filled with dreams of journalistic glory and emulation. I was the most recently recruited and junior member of *The Times* Imperial and Foreign News Editor's staff, devilling for an obtuse but kindly mandarin master, playing the inept but sedulous ape to his dazzling ADC (Mr Peregrine Worsthorne), sub-editing vast turnover articles on the Spanish economy and reporting the Missing Diplomats to the 4.15 news conference. 'Maclean is a *carrière* man, but Burgess seems a notorious unknown quantity . . .' ('The rogue elephant of the Gargoyle,' murmured the old young men knowledgeably to one another.) In those palmy days Morrison, the former resident *Times* correspondent at Peking, was a sacred legend.

Born in 1862, arriving in China in 1897, given up for dead by *The Times* itself as a result of the *Daily Mail* fake eye-witness account of the Boxer Rising, and prematurely obituarised by his own Foreign Editor, he lived on to become the first Western Adviser to the Chinese Republic and died, not yet 60 but full of reputation and rancour, at Sidmouth in the summer of 1921.

Here he is, however, at the age of 38, in the frontispiece to this handsome edition of his correspondence, a clean-shaven ex-rugger blue of Scandinavian proportions and the face of a young Daniel come to judgment, sitting sternly but monumentally relaxed in the courtyard of his bachelor home in Peking just after the siege. Somehow he seems to bear the scars of his ecstatic obituary ('characteristic of the best type of Colonial Englishman'), couched in such terms that he said himself later it would make it hard for *The Times* to get rid of him when it wanted to. The Europeans, wrote the *Mail* romancer,

> fought with calm courage to the end against overwhelming hordes of fanatical barbarians thirsting for their blood . . . they have died as we would have had them die, fighting to the last for the helpless women and children who were to be butchered over their dead bodies . . . Of the Ladies, it is enough to say that in this awful hour they showed themselves worthy of their husbands . . All that remains for us is to mourn them and avenge them . . .

There was little mourning but plenty of revenge in the shape of looting to be done. The Russians, Germans and French (in roughly that order of barbarism) and the five other European relief contingents vied with each other to dismantle the Summer Palace; even Lady MacDonald, the British Minister's wife, had her 185 crated boxes. This was the Legation world that Morrison exposed, in which his reputation soared and spiralled.

To see him in his true perspective, it is his early and forgotten reputation as a young Australian miracle worker that must be realised. Born in Geelong, Victoria, the eldest son of Kirk parents, George Ernest Morrison wore his pioneer outfit with panache. He was a strine knight-errant of the outback with the keen circumstantial eye of the born reporter. At the age of 17 he walked 650 miles from his home to Adelaide, following this up with a long canoe trip down the largely uncharted Murray, Australia's longest river. When his medical studies were interrupted, he set out to explore North Queensland. At the age of 21, he led an expedition across the Torres Straits into darkest New Guinea, where his exposure of the Kanaka slave trade resulted in a Colonial Office inquiry. In 1892, unaccompanied and without compass, he walked more than 2,000 miles in 123 days from the Gulf of Carpentaria in extreme Northern Australia to Melbourne, covering the same route 'as that on which Bourke and Wells, for all their fanfare and with a large convoy and material support, had perished 21 years previously'. He completed his medical studies at Edinburgh and prepared to roam the world. He missed a boat bound for Japan and arrived in China in 1893. The following year, clad in a scholar's cap and gown and with £18 in his pocket, he made the 3,000-mile journey

new from Manchester

THE CANAL BOATMEN 1760-1914 **Harry Hanson** This book examines the lifestyle of the families who worked narrow boats over an extensive area of the Midlands, tracing their social condition against the rise of the canal system and ultimate decline under the impact of the railway. Mr Hanson shows how a distinctive sub-culture developed among the canal people and reassesses allegations of depravity made against them. – 'Quite simply the best book to appear on the lives of canal boatmen and their families' – Anthony Burton, *Oxford Mail* Illustrated *£9.00 net*

THE ORIGIN OF ULSTER UNIONISM **Peter Gibbon** Popular movements of the right do not, any more than the left, arise without certain social causes, and Dr Gibbon's aim is to identify the conditions that gave birth to Unionism and ensured its growth. Pinpointing social events – the development of Orangeism, religious revivals, urban riots etc – he shows how the form and content of Unionist politics can be traced to tensions in the rhythm of social change in Ulster. – ' . . . can be warmly recommended to all those interested in coming to grips with the Ulster question' – *The Irish Press* *£6.00 net*

THE MANAGEMENT OF MYTHS THE POLITICS OF LEGITIMATION IN A NEWFOUNDLAND COMMUNITY **Anthony P. Cohen** This important new book on the sociology of politics shows the strategies by which leaders compete for the villagers' approval of their personalities and policies in a Newfoundland provincial town. Dr Cohen argues that this is achieved by the leaders' social activities, roles in public life and careful manipulation of their local 'image' in relation to the villagers' expectations. *£4.95 net*

THE INFLUENCE OF LAW ON SEA POWER **D. P. O'Connell** The use made of international law in naval planning has never before been the subject of special study, yet as Professor O'Connell shows it is at the heart of naval doctrine, influencing tactics, weapon mix and even procurement policy. His research includes the battle of the river Plate and the *Altmark* incident – revealing the underestimated importance of the legal factors involved. He then considers the theory and practice of naval operations to the present day drawing vividly on nearly every instance of hostilities at sea since 1945. *£6.50 net*

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from Shanghai to Rangoon. He wrote a book (his only one, as a crowded life turned out), caught a fever, and sailed for England where he stumbled upon *The Times* and his Chinese destiny by accident.

Morrison is partly embodied in his letters, partly in his diaries and memoranda and partly in Cyril Pearl's rumbustious biography, *Morrison of Peking* (Penguin 1970), now, alas, about to be withdrawn from the paperback list just as its full complementary value as a Morrison source-book is becoming apparent. There he appears not only as the 'Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and *one of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*' (my italics), but as a boastful and loud-mouthed contemner of the world and a frabjous ass about women. Judging by the adventures related in this book – the gifts given (and itemised), the anguished telegrams, the high-class foreign brothels West of Suez visited (and disgustedly rejected), the procession of mysterious and bewitching widows and divorcees encountered on the world's big steamer routes, Elinor Glyn and her tiger-skin was the only imperial nest of love he left unvisited.

Against this background dream of fair women (but sharply set apart) moves Morrison's phalanx of heroes – H. M. Stanley, Joe Chamberlain, Dr Jameson of Raid fame, and an imperial round table of mutual hero-worshippers – Mark Twain, Kipling (whom Morrison visited at Bateman's and for whose wife he bought jade in bazaars), Lords Curzon and Rosebery, Theodore Roosevelt ('Bully!' for the Treaty of Portsmouth) and many others. He underrated Sir Ernest Satow, the great Sino-Japanese scholar-diplomat, and noted Kitchener's lust for porcelain as part of the legitimate lust for other people's empires.

As one would imagine, he was unimpressed by bluestockings (see what he says about a visit from Gertrude Bell in the letters). Having not a word of spoken let alone written Chinese himself, he was not enamoured of the stylish, flowery old Treaty Port hands such as J. O. P. Bland and Sir Edmund Backhouse who sniped away so assiduously at his legend and his prompt dispatch. His strength lay in his contacts, 'probably the broadest human contacts of anyone in China', a *comédie humaine* of

> officials and diplomats, scholars and concession hunters, deserted wives, destitutes and cranks. It was no accident that Morrison was so often the first one to get the news, and that his information was so detailed and reliable.

How did he really feel about the Chinese themselves? A distinguished Sinologist has suggested to me that Morrison's gut-reaction – not to the effete mandarins of the Tsungli Yamen but to the people he met on his extensive travels throughout China – was that of a District Commissioner who admired the Sherpas.

As his correspondence shows, he was an unrepentant out-and-out Imperialist, one who always put the British Empire a long way first and knew that the Kaiser's war was inevitable. See his letter to his old friend E. G. Hillier of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank:

> I have repeatedly told you that the policy of Germany in this Hankow Loan affair was to sow distrust between us and the Americans and that I would be compelled to take notice of it in *The Times* . . . I have an immense admiration for your Bank and I have a multitude of friends in it of whom you are the one I most admire but I would rather see your Bank wiped out of existence than that it should be the means even unintentionally of assisting Germany to cause misunderstanding between us and the Americans.

After furiously backing the Japanese against the Russians – so much so that the events that culminated at Tsushima were popularly described as 'Morrison's War' – he veered against Japan and backed the wrong horse in the Chinese Revolution. Today Peking's 'Morrison Street' is 'Former Morrison Street' and you will search the 1,070 pages of Immanuel C. Y. Hsu's *Rise of Modern China* vainly for a mention of his name. In the mind's eye I like to think of him as having shed his weight of Western gear – the foreign bonds, war loans, railway concessions and the rest – and following his friend Kipling's Lama to the Tibet he longed to visit and never did. Somewhere in that scroll-work of mountains and valleys, Morrison is searching for the River of the Arrow.

John Derry

Prime Virtues

The Elder Pitt by STANLEY AYLING *Collins* £6.50

Four years ago Mr Stanley Ayling published a biography of King George III which was distinguished by its intelligent and judicious treatment of a controversial subject. He has now turned his attention to the Elder Pitt, an even more difficult subject for a biographer: it is not easy to penetrate the theatrical gestures and exaggerated postures of Pitt's public figure to the man behind the rhetoric. The admiration which an older generation of historians lavished on Chatham makes it harder for a modern biographer to treat his career in a style which avoids substituting excessive denigration for extreme adulation. But Mr Ayling has succeeded and written what is by far the best single volume on the Elder Pitt; there is no doubt that anyone looking for a comprehensive survey of his career should turn, first of all, to these pages. He depicts not only the thundering man of genius but also the more vulnerable, more fallible and (as he adds) not always more accessible Pitt. He shows sympathy and compassion, acuteness and insight. His style is lively and witty. The narrative is full enough to convey the complexity of events, while carrying the reader along. But Mr Ayling is not superficial. Affection for his subject is matched by a responsible sense of fairness to Pitt's rivals, and Pitt's faults and failings are never ignored or minimised.

Mr Ayling is duly appreciative of what he owes to the work of specialist historians in the political and diplomatic history of 18th-century England, but he is critical in the use he makes of them. He admits that Basil Williams's work remains the foundation on which all biographers of Pitt must build, but he shows how different Williams's assumptions were from his own. The idea that Chatham's greatest claim to fame lay in his imperial vision is shown to have been closely linked to the imperial preconceptions of the Edwardian era. Ayling states that he writes from a post-imperial viewpoint, but he does not find it necessary to belittle Pitt's imperial vision. He does, however, argue that our modern viewpoint approximates more closely to that of Pitt's contemporaries, who were more conscious than many later historians of the erratic changes of attitude and alignment which marked his career.

Mr Ayling's portrait is related to the intense and bitter disputes within the Pitt family. He deals particularly well with the character of Governor Pitt and with Chatham's chequered relationship with his sister Ann. He shows exemplary sense in his treatment of Pitt's health, casting doubt on the old romantic version of Pitt as a sickly boy, 'dreaming of greatness . . . while he watched, half enviously, half scornfully, the sports in which he might not join'. He is aware of the psychological element in

Gavin Ewart

Sonnet: Daffodils

Wordsworth really loved daffodils. He said they were flashers.
Certainly they must be the most exhibitionistic flowers there are,
trumpeting their presence in yellow – by far the most visible colour.
I grant that after a long hard winter
it's warming to see snowdropsand crocuses in that iron earth
and the very first daffodils (what a cliché) seem a resurrection,
something it even seems appropriate to make a fuss about.
They look so perfect, though a bit self-conscious.

After a week or two, however, when Spring is established,
and everywhere you look there are oceans of daffodils
as arrogant as pop stars, they begin to seem ordinary.
You take them for granted. Like a love affair fading
they shrivel and go crinkly, papery and tired.
The Spring too (teenagers witness) has its own kind of boredom.

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Pitt's bouts of illness but, though manic depression is given its due, he comments that a psychological label doesn't necessarily mean enlightenment.

The military and diplomatic aspects of the War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years War are discussed with admirable vigour and clarity and, for all his post-imperial consciousness, Ayling does not ignore the significance of the colonial dimension in Anglo-French conflict. He brings out Pitt's lifelong concern for America in a way which makes explicable his sympathy for the Americans during the disputes over the Stamp Act and the Townshend duties. But even here Pitt's tendency to idealise the Americans is shown as leading him to misread the situation in the 1770s. Pitt brought to the American dispute a vision and an intensity of imagination which few of his contemporaries could equal; but Ayling stresses that this did not mean he had a workable solution to the difficulties which were pushing Britain and America further apart.

Pitt's gift was for both reflecting and exploiting many of the prejudices shared by so many backbench MPs, and Ayling is also excellent in his treatment of Pitt's relationship with the City. He is convincing in his analysis of Pitt's attitudes towards Dissent, the Church of Rome, the naturalisation of the Jews, the freedom of the press and civil liberties. Throughout the Wilkes affair Pitt always differentiated between the principles which were at stake, and the personality and conduct of Wilkes himself. He never countenanced libels, even while disapproving of the methods of proceeding against them; in a letter to the Rev. Paul Shenton Pitt asserted that he had always abhorred odious writings: 'in the late instance of the *North Briton* no man concurred more heartily than I did in condemning and branding so licentious and criminal a paper.'

Pitt's lifelong detestation of French absolutism and his commitment to the struggle against France are vividly conveyed, but there is no pretence that his leadership meant that the war always went well or that significant errors of judgment were not made. Ayling makes credible not only the adulation which surrounded Pitt but also the anxieties he inspired among colleagues and contemporaries who shared Hardwicke's misgivings that Pitt's policies implied perpetual war. Ayling is equally convincing in stressing the limitations of Pitt's criticisms of the Peace of Paris, arguing that a few more islands taken or a number of fishing grounds denied would hardly have removed from France either the will to seek revenge or the capability to gain it. But even if there was much that was factious about Pitt's determination to find no good in the Peace,

> yet, even amid some transparent absurdities his criticism had its root in passionate conviction: a genuine fear and hatred of the might of France, a burning desire to humble the Bourbon powers, extinguish their empires, and put beyond challenge the world-wide wealth and authority of Britain.

Similarly, there is no attempt to deny that Pitt has to share responsibility for much of the political confusion and bitterness of the 1760s; but while arguing that the two undoubted successes of Pitt's life were his conduct of the Seven Years War and his marriage to Hester Grenville, Ayling reaffirms that Pitt's fundamental convictions were moulded by intense patriotism, a conviction that English society united order with liberty, and a belief that the finest lessons for his own time were those to be found in the pages of his beloved Homer and Virgil: 'honour, courage, disinterestedness, love of truth, command of temper, gentleness of behaviour, humanity, and, in one word, virtue.'

Bernard Crick

Balancing Act

Democracy and Participation by J. R. LUCAS
Penguin 80p

Whenever I see a Pelican Original I wonder whether the Open University, Extra-Mural, Birkbeck College, and 'continuing education' in any other form are really necessary. Pelican was for so long the *éducation permanente* of everybody with sixpence or its inflated equivalent to spare. Of late, however, its political products have shown a certain lack of reasonable balance, as Mr J. R. Lucas would surely put it. Apart from a few enjargoned books comprehensible only to social scientists, most of its political list has been trendy Marxist Left. And that, while no doubt meant to be accessible to the general educated reader, rarely is. Now the balancing begins.

This is a book written from a charmingly old-fashioned perspective by a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. It is a kind of pendant to Lowes Dickinson's *A Modern Symposium*. Earnest fellows debate from principle and in the abstract about whether a state can be too democratic or not democratic enough, point to the dangers of democracy and to its undoubted advantages; but not a theory of why we may be holding these views ruffles the pages and there is no discussion of concrete issues other than the environment but only invented and whimsical tutorial examples of 'real problems', hardly the social and economic problems of student activists with whom he is arguing by not arguing, just carrying on in the old humanist Christian Whiggish tradition.

Whether this is a display of courage or of naïveté, I am at a loss to be sure. 'Suppose five of us want to go to the Bear, but I insist on going to the Eastgate' – well, we may compromise, we may bargain or we may reach deadlock. If we reach deadlock,

> then there are only two possibilities left. Either we say that no decision is possible, or we can have some rule or convention whereby we can say what the corporate decision shall be deemed to be, even though not everyone actually agrees with it.

The former, he says, underlies the thinking of Locke and the latter underlies the thinking of Rousseau. He favours Locke over Rousseau. In the examples discussed, there is no need for any decisions to be made at all: the road need not be built, the house need not be pulled down, and we would be none the worse. Good ideas abound:

> We cannot believe that the whole duty of a man as a member of a free society is to drive the hardest bargains he can, and maximise his profits in all his transactions with his fellows.
>
> Unless we take steps to prevent it, only the pushing and self-opinionated will in fact participate, and participation will favour the manipulators rather than the unsophisticated exponents of honest truth.

Not all milk and water he can be stern:

> We cannot always give way to the minority, however ardently they desire it. But in so far as they can produce a show of reason on their side, and are not merely out to feather their own nests, we should make it our policy to defer to their feelings quite a lot. It is a politic policy – by so doing we shall often reconcile them to accepting our views on other matters, and generally make our community have more of a common mind about more things.

Old Machiavel! But it is not the vagueness that entrances me so much as the cool, calm confidence that we can still cope, despite the fact that 'democracy easily leads to parties and factions, and these, once established, will polarise opinion and preclude sensible solutions to current problems'. He favours government by coalition, of course. He believes in sensible discussion:

> Up and down the country, in common rooms and messes and public houses, there are innumerable centres of discussion, where people air their views and have their say . . . Democracy can flourish only in a land of pubs.

Not very relevant, but very decent Asquithian liberalism; somehow I like it. I don't agree, indeed I rather disapprove, but when they are about to execute him, I'll risk my life to save him.

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Tony Tanner

Panic Stations

The Edge of Impossibility and **New Heaven, New Earth** by JOYCE CAROL OATES *Gollancz* £6.00 each

One of the words that seems to occur most often in the work of Joyce Carol Oates is 'panic', a feeling triggered by a growing sense in her characters that they don't know who they are, what they are, or indeed *that* they are. Her novels and stories seem mainly to be about loneliness and loss; so it is not surprising when turning to her literary criticism to find such opening assertions as:

> The art of tragedy grows out of a break between self and community, a sense of isolation . . . Art is built around violence, around death; at its base is fear.

On the other hand she believes that artists should 'insist upon the sanctity of this world' and that some of them can act as 'gnostic intermediaries, like translators' and offer us some 'mystical vision' which, she insists, is not opposed to 'common sense' but only an extension of it. Thus the 'tense, neck-breaking game played by art on the edge of impossibility' (Thomas Mann) may re-acquaint us with the abyss; or it may offer us intimations of some wondrous alteration of perception and person unimaginable within our present systems of thought. We may say that for Joyce Carol Oates art moves between panic and transformation.

Thus her first book has essays on Shakespeare, Melville, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Yeats, Mann and Ionesco; and her second has essays on Henry James and Virginia Woolf, Lawrence, Beckett, Harriette Arnow (I'll come back to her), Sylvia Plath, Flannery O'Connor, Norman Mailer, James Dickey and Kafka. And yet despite this concern with extremes there is something anodyne and bland, at times even slack, about the writing of many of these essays. Among other things it wasn't very clear to me what audience she thought she was writing for. 'Civilisation, Freud believed, is shaped out of the frustration of aggressive impulses.' Thank you, Miss Oates. '*Dr Faustus*, along with *The Magic Mountain* and *Ulysses*, is one of the most complex novels ever written.' There are a lot of statements like that and it's hard to say whether they are engagingly naïve or simply fatuous. What is less hard to infer is that, just as her almost unbelievable productivity as a writer of fiction must mean that she does little if any revision, so in her criticism whatever comes into her head goes on to the page.

In addition, a lot of the essays involve a retelling or summary of the stories, plots, processes, of the works under examination. She does this kind of exposition lucidly, intelligently and enthusiastically, but at times I had the sense of being introduced to extremely familiar material. And, to conclude my demurring, the catholicity of her taste – of which I entirely approve – involves her in terms of praise which are almost entirely meaningless in a critical discourse: for example, Thomas Mann's art is 'beautifully managed'; in Beckett, 'the tragedy of the isolated ego . . . is dramatised in a way that cannot be faulted', and so on into other fond imprecisions. But she does have something important to say, a particular position and point of view to articulate, and I will try to bring it somewhat into focus.

At the end of her book on tragedy (the first one), she concludes her essay on Ionesco thus:

> But Ionesco comes closer to the gravest most sinister truth about ourselves – being is an empty fiction, and our 'becoming' is equally fictitious, equally empty, for we stand in front of locked doors, motionless, not lacking the power of motion but willed to motionlessness, waiting for a key or a miracle. There is no key, there is no miracle. Being is an empty fiction. Becoming is a nightmare from which waking is both a salvation and annihilation.

I don't believe that Joyce Carol Oates believes that. She believes in nightmares all right, but – despite the quotations from Borges, Ionesco *et al.*, which are fairly liberally scattered through her work – I think she believes in 'being' in a fairly straightforward, traditional Western way. To be sure, she concludes her book on visionary literature with an interesting reading of Kafka, stressing his interest in Taoism and the 'great coherence' which contains and thus transcends all antinomies, but I think we can find more of the central creed of Joyce Carol Oates in the essay on Harriette Arnow, subtitled – in a phrase which might be applied to some of her own work – 'The Nightmare of Naturalism'. Arnow's novel is *The Dollmaker* and I haven't read it, but for Miss Oates it is 'a legitimate tragedy, our most unpretentious American masterpiece'. Apparently it is about a dislocated Kentucky family which goes to pieces in Detroit towards the end of World War II:

> Sunk helplessly in flesh, as in the turbulent uncontrollable mystery of the 'economy', the human being with spiritual yearnings becomes tragic when these yearnings are defeated or mocked or, as in *The Dollmaker* by Harriette Arnow, brutally transformed into a part of the social machine . . . It is a depressing work, like most extraordinary works. Its power lies in its insistence upon the barrenness of life.

And – a revealing comment – 'Mrs Arnow writes so well, *with so little apparent effort*, that critical examination seems irrelevant' (my italics). Miss Oates finds Mrs Arnow's subject-matter 'more basic to our American experience' than what we find in Henry James whose work, along with Virginia Woolf's, she honours 'not because of their subject-matter but in spite of it'. The bias is clear and it is away from that art which takes delight in its own artifice and linguistic texturing: at times it seems as if a highly developed concern for craft is, for Miss Oates, a form of solipsism.

She is particularly against 'confessional' writing by writers obsessed with their own problems 'when perhaps there is no problem, except this insane preoccupation with the self and its moods and doubts, while much of the human universe simply struggles for survival'. This position leads to two essays vigorously challenging the assumptions and implications of the work of Sylvia Plath and Norman Mailer, which any one interested in contemporary literature would do well to read. For Miss Oates Plath's work represents 'the death throes of Romanticism', the final plight of the isolated Western 'ego' which feels victimised by all around it and as a result longs to get away from adulthood, language, humanity. Miss Oates does not want to share Sylvia Plath's 'regressive fantasies' which at times seem to her pathological:

> The experience of reading her poems is a frightening one: it is like waking to discover one's adult self, grown to full height, crouched in some long-forgotten childhood hiding place, one's heart pounding senselessly.

– though she adds that the experience is 'valuable'! She attacks Plath's expressed desire to escape from language and get back into nature, 'for the denial of language is a suicidal one and we pay for it with our lives'. For Miss Oates, language and consciousness don't take us 'out' of nature in some way; it is all one continuum: 'the "I" of the poet', so tortured and self-torturing in much modern poetry, 'belongs as naturally in the universe as any other aspect of its fluid totality'.

This leads on to an indictment of Norman Mailer (with the usual sugaring of really somewhat condescending sentiments of admiration and praise) and his 'nihilistic bifurcation of human nature'. What these two, and many other contemporary writers suffer from is a 'paralysis of the imagination' which is

> a natural result of a faith in themselves as isolated 'egos' burdened, if male, with the need to conquer, and if female – like Sylvia Plath – terrified of the prospect, seen as inevitable, of being conquered. In Mailer's case he has constructed an entire body of work around a Manichaean existentialism a combination of two deadly pseudo-philosophical propositions.

That is the polemical core of Miss Oates' criticism and provides an important insight into what she herself may be striving towards in her own work – getting beyond panic into some transformed relationship with the world. But the transformation has not taken place, the new mutants have not appeared, so meanwhile art should seek to avoid all kinds of narcissism and reconnect with externality in more fruitful forms. Miss Oates quotes approvingly the Wallace Stevens line 'We keep coming back and coming back to the real', and it could be taken as a kind of motto for her. I think there are more ways 'back to the real' than she perhaps allows in the very heart of her aesthetic, away from surface generosities. The problems and their solutions are not as simple as she seems to think. Nevertheless her criticism at its best makes us aware of possible perspectives on modern literature which we should not ignore.

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Douglas Johnson

Mastermind

Voltaire and the Century of Light by A. OWEN ALDRIDGE *Princeton* £12.50

Most people know what to think about Voltaire. He is usually thought of as a valiant and courageous man, who spent a long life fighting against tyranny, superstition, hypocrisy and injustice; he was a wit who believed that through laughter one could crush one's enemies; a prolific writer, he was also a man of action, someone who wrote in order to act (whereas Rousseau, he suggested, wrote only to write). In short, he is usually seen as the most distinguished and the most typical of all those philosophers, moralists and thinkers who make up the Enlightenment, which has been called man's intellectual coming of age. Voltaire is the preferred model for all who claim to be radical, rationalist and humanitarian.

All this is true enough. But Voltaire is far from being such a clear-cut character. His career began with a long period in which he wrote only imitative and stilted poetry. Although usually described as anti-Catholic, he quarrelled with an English Quaker about the sacrament of baptism, he built a Catholic church for his tenants at Ferney and was determined to be buried on consecrated ground. Whilst he was influenced by his experience of English intellectual life in the 1720s, no one is certain about the exact nature of that influence, and it has been claimed that he never fully understood either the science or the philosophy which he publicised. Since he had thoughts on many subjects, and many thoughts on any subject, it is easy to find prejudice, confusion and shallowness, a desire to caricature rather than understand, to destroy rather than create.

Owen Aldridge's long and detailed book will not resolve the paradoxes in a way which will be satisfactory to everyone. It is an attempt to produce a biography of a man as well as an assessment of a writer, and it draws heavily upon the Besterman edition of the correspondence as well as on the recent work of many specialists. But it is essentially a tribute, albeit a scholarly one, to a man whose greatness is frequently asserted, and Professor Aldridge is not reluctant to go in for special pleading himself. Thus, when Frederick the Great denounced Voltaire's duplicities, cheatings and infamies, distinguishing between a brilliant mind and an unscrupulous heart, we find the author stating that throughout his long life Voltaire was never guilty of a single despicable action. If he was sometimes untruthful in the affairs of daily living, this was accepted procedure in the circles in which he moved. There may have been, he tells us, 'one or two other minor flaws' in Voltaire's character, but they were more than counterbalanced by his personal virtues.

It could be argued that this desire to defend Voltaire at all costs and on all occasions can easily become tiresome, and in any case it is largely irrelevant to a modern audience. What one really wants to know about is the creative writing, and here this book is surprisingly disappointing. Surely to illustrate the importance of Voltaire less time should be spent telling us about the heartache he felt when he contemplated the poor peasantry of Ferney, and more to discussing the masterpieces. For masterpieces there are. *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, for example, is a remarkable work, although it shows many of the contradictions inherent in Voltaire's thought and writing, and although it has been considered as a curious example of hero-worship, neither fulfilling the author's expressed intentions nor corresponding to his belief in the rule of law. But Professor Aldridge hardly examines it, and the pages devoted to *Candide* are scarcely appropriate for a work which has been compared to *Don Quixote* and to *Faust*. He neither tells us of Voltaire's insights in the one work, nor of his artistry in the other, the way in which he grappled with the philosophy of history here, or held opposites in suspense there. Although Voltaire was a most interesting man, it is the quality of his writings which concerns us. For Frederick the Great was right: Voltaire is good only to read.

Elaine Feinstein

Moony

Another Full Moon by RUTH FAINLIGHT *Hutchinson* £1.95
Catacomb Suburb by ALASTAIR FOWLER *Edinburgh* £2.50
The Blocked Heart by EDWIN BROCK *Secker & Warburg* £2.90

I hope we're all doing something really useful with our brain-cells over here in England now, because we're certainly being pretty mean about having them cluttered up with poetry. It's a cultural choice like any other; in Moscow, computer engineers the wrong side of thirty seem to have enough spare to learn whole books of poems by heart, and I do mean recent poems. (There is a Russian black-market in new books of poetry.) But few people in England say poetry out loud, unless officially sanctioned; the noise of it over coffee would probably make them faintly uncomfortable. Poetry can be *discussed*, naturally; assessed for wit, elegance, clarity or whatever. But the stuff itself is somehow supposed to sit on the bookshelf.

And yet there are memorable poems in all these books. Ruth Fainlight's fifth book of poems is decisively her best. In her earlier volumes, it has always seemed to me that two almost separable personalities can be distinguished: the first, analytically worrying away at some fact of personal experience, has won her praise for intelligence and restraint; the second, darker voice was recognised long ago by Sylvia Plath, when she dedicated her poem 'Elm' to her; it has emerged more slowly, beginning to be heard firmly and clearly in *This Region's Violence*, and now in *Another Full Moon* almost entirely dominant. It is as if the poet has abandoned herself without caution to the moon itself, so clearly do her images rise from a recurrent brooding vision of the changeable planet, now

> darkened from yellow
> Of faded leather into the streaked
> mottled red of
> An old woman's cheek

Or (in an entirely different poem)

> floating over the marshes
> Like a fine slice of Prague ham,
> Tender, pink, nearly translucent.

But the book is rich in observations of many kinds: of old ladies, other people's hair and eyelids, the role of women as together Muse and Poet, the mysteries of insects, all in a voice free and lyrical, without strain.

Alastair Fowler's first book, *Catacomb Suburb*, has already been noticed as uncommonly clever (which it is) and linguistically agile. He sustains a great variety of styles, changing from concrete patterns of type to formal stanzaic structures, which are deeply worked and frequently moving. There are even one or two Sixties-American Williams triadic verses; and an amusing piece of mock-Creeley about the way we all like to put things off all the time, saying

> After the kids go back to School.
> When things ease off. When we're flush. . .

– a poem which, as much as anything else, brings home the odd relationship Creeley has to Larkin, in their ability to deal with the domestically appalling.

The best poems in the book, however, are unmistakably the densely worked sonnets, which are hard to quote from fairly; and some of 'Pictures', particularly 'The Lady sits for her Daguerreotype', where accidental blurs 'fox some great townscapes', and

> There are ghosts of carriages; carts;
> Hackneys with greedy lovers;
> impatient landaus:
> There is no knowing; each goes a
> flown plume,
> A feathery hearse.

Edwin Brock's poems stick very readily; and he deserves the rare passage of English poet to American audience (through *New Directions*) if only because his knowledge that 'our plague is the blocked heart' has in some way freed him from inhibitions.

But sometimes his images, and his whole relation to daily life, are just too easy, and

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we resent the facility that turns true pain into clever verse. Sometimes phrases offend without the necessary pain: for instance, 'On Sunday

> we take a snot-nosed mongol
> to the beach: Faster, faster she sings
> in the car, exploding a sausage roll

But he has a good casual tone for less ambitious speculation; for instance, his questioning Cat about why God can't afford to live in his churches any more; and he is often funny, which is still a legitimate function of verse.

Julian Barnes

Ductile

Miss Silver's Past by JOSEF SKVORECKY translated by Peter Kussi *Bodley Head* £3.50
Moise and the World of Reason by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS *W. H. Allen* £3.25
Saving the Queen by WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR *W. H. Allen* £3.50
Letter to My Mother by GEORGES SIMENON translated by Ralph Manheim *Hamish Hamilton* £2.75

Miss Silver's Past, first published in Prague in 1969, was banned and pulped the following year. This bureaucratic double-take (which also occurred with Josef Skvorecky's first novel *The Cowards*) is explicable partly by the work's deprecatory self-description as 'neither a psychological novel nor a social novel, but a detective story'; and partly by one of its own comic subjects – the jumpy, paranoid method by which a state publishing house reaches decisions about contemporary fiction. A bonus (if depressing) irony, then, is that the novel provides a commentary on its own fate. As the fence-sitting chief publisher puts it, 'You know what I always say? Good satire criticises conditions only after they have been improved.'

Acute and wry though it is, *Miss Silver's Past* is subversive more in its assumptions than by any direct statement; it belongs less to the underground anti-communist school than to the older tradition of bureaucratic satire, reaching back to Gogol. The central comic question is how to keep one's balance in a government organisation which lumbers along on inefficiency, indecision and fear of political bosses. Karel Leden, playing the Vicar of Bray, survives by an elastic sense of judgment and an ability to toady sensitively to whoever is winning. Only fools and idealists are careless; and careless people lose, always. Karel adopts the same pragmatic approach to his personal life, but finds women creatures of inexplicable principle; playing off his mistress Vera against the lovely Lenka Silver results, hearteningly, in the loss of both of them. Here, politely, lies Mr Skorecky's serious point about the effect of a warped public morality on private behaviour. Worked in as well, in an unexpected way, is a stylish and tantalising reordering of the detective story. The crime and its solution occur, almost together, right at the end of the book, and the reader guesses forward to both victim and murderer. The spin-off from this technique, of course, is that we focus more closely on the social themes which Mr Skvorecky vainly attempts to disown; and a set-piece explanatory monologue, while posing as homage to Poirot, is also clearly the quickest way of wrapping up a secondary subject.

'I suppose that writers are predisposed to laugh at all excesses but their own,' notes Tennessee Williams with unexpectedly sober insight. Much of his work, indeed, seems designed to prove that nothing succeeds like excess. His first novel since 1950 concerns a lower-depths threesome near the South Hudson docks: a 'distinguished failed writer' of 30, who is 'hung out of sight for a kid that is five foot seven and a fraction or two'; Lance, his black ice-skater lover; and Moise, a painter dissatisfied with the world of reason. 'What is life,' muses the narrator at one point, 'but a memory of asses and cunts you've been into'; and his qualification of this as 'just an hysterical expletive of the libido' is hardly supported by the ceaseless bouts of pillowing. The prose makes a great show of hanging loose, bucking craftsmanship, backchatting hiply, and stopping 'realistically', in mid-sentence. Rarely, though, does one sense much organisation.

William F. Buckley Jr, nostalgic conservative, harks back in his sprightly thriller to the early Fifties when the cold war had some real heat in it. It is also perhaps the first novel since Swinburne's *La Fille du Policeman* to feature the Queen of England on the job. Not, I hasten to add, our own dear Queen, but a certain Caroline, an extravert little number who made the throne after a wide-ranging plane crash. Someone in her entourage is leaking details of the American H-bomb project back to Uncle Joe. Dashing CIA man Blackford Oakes ('the straw in his hair blooming after the long winter') wisetalks his way into Buck House and finally scores at Windsor, where he has to fend off post-coital stumpers like 'What is the Teller-Freeze Bypass?' The tone is fizzy but the English detail is less than flawless – collegers at Eton are drawn from 'the poorer classes', and the Queen declines a pass with an unregal 'You're a duck'. It's a jolly, name-throwing romp, and quite takes one back to the days of James Stewart in *The FBI Story*.

Simenon's personal writings have an unsentimentality which is rigorous yet unaffected. *Letter to My Mother* is the interior monologue which unreels as he sits at his mother's bedside, waiting for her to die. She lies detached and self-possessed, while he tries to work out his long, evasive, and moving relationship with her, in which neither quite trusted or loved the other. It is also extremely funny, not least in Mme Simenon's persistent refusal to be impressed by her son's success. When she visited him in later years she used to corner his servants and demand to know if the house had been paid for. She was obstinate, a little crazy, and full of the pride of poverty: at the end of her life she returned to her son every sou he had given her over the previous fifty years. It is indeed this independence from him, amounting almost to rejection, which seems most deeply to compel his allegiance.

Shorter Notices

Two Decades of Irish Writing edited by DOUGLAS DUNN *Carcanet* £5.80

Irish writers, says Douglas Dunn in his introduction to this critical survey, 'are forced to make practical *decisions* about their perspectives on history, politics and literature'; and the point is promptly illustrated by Seamus Deane's bravura opening contribution, 'Irish Poetry and Irish Nationalism', in which he calls for the adoption of politics 'as a mode of the imagination'. Seamus Heaney and Michael Longley write revealingly about Kavanagh and MacNeice, D. E. S. Maxwell indulgently about the Northern poets, and Roger Garfitt brilliantly about contemporary fiction. His piece on Francis Stuart is particularly good: Garfitt draws an interesting parallel between him and D. H. Lawrence, both sexual evangelists, both prophets banned in their own countries.

Publishing difficulties have meant that this book was long in the making and is therefore slightly out of date. Many of the writers discussed have published new work in the meantime, and newly emergent writers like Ian Cochrane don't get a look-in at all. Also, there's the matter of the title, which infringes the Trade Descriptions Act. There is as much space devoted to writers whose best work was done over 20 years ago as to contemporary figures. And yet this harking back does make a kind of sense; for as Borges remarked, every writer creates his own precursors: 'His work modifies the past, as it will modify the future.' And modification of the past is one of the Irish writer's abiding preoccupations.

D.M.

The Trial of Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh by ROGER MANVELL *Elek/Pemberton* £5.95

'The poor are my clients' was Annie Besant's claim when she stood in the dock in 1877, accused of publishing an 'obscene libel' – a pamphlet on birth control. She received no support at all from other feminists and forfeited custody of her daughter as a result of the case, which was lost, but then won on Appeal. However, she impressed the Lord Chief Justice (Sir Alexander Cockburn); the notoriety of the affair spread knowledge of contraception most effectively; and her brilliant performance may have encouraged other women to study law, as Mr Manvell suggests. By printing her speech verbatim for the first time in a hundred years, he shows what a powerful speaker she was, an unexpectedly brisk wit supporting her passionate flow of Victorian eloquence. She argued her case on the right of free discussion; on the facts of overpopulation, poverty, infant mortality and infanticide; on the general human need to gratify desire; and on the preferability of a 'birth check' over a 'death check'. Modern applications suggest themselves readily enough. This is probably the best of, and the essential, Besant.

C.T.

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Films

John Coleman

Aimez-Vous Delvaux . . .

Rendezvous at Bray *Minema, 45 Knightsbridge*
Steppenwolf *Paris Pullman now; Phoenix East Finchley, from 18 March*
One of Our Dinosaurs Is Missing *Odeon, St Martin's Lane*

The Belgian director André Delvaux is one of those refined spirits of the cinema (others might be Alain Resnais at his most self-indulgent, Marguerite Duras any time) who delight in insoluble problem pictures: *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short*, *Un Soir . . . un Train* and, in 1971, *Rendez-vous à Bray*. He is the sort of open-ended creator one can imagine Susan Sontag having a terminological ball with. As a matter of fact, the most useful critical essay I have encountered on his first three works ('Countries of the Mind' by Tom Milne, *Sight & Sound*, Spring 1972) seems aware of certain hazards. This is how Mr Milne, discussing *Rendez-vous*, lets the cat's head at least peep from the bag:

> . . . despite its basic simplicity, [it] is not an easy film to unravel because one has to approach it as though one were deaf and dumb, trusting to one's sense of sight and touch because nuances are never put into words.

This admission, for such I take it to be, has its own confusions: how do you 'touch' images and surely whatever M. Delvaux is up to depends unusually heavily on its use of music – Brahms, Franck, one Frédéric Devreese? But one knows, in a general way, what is intended here: that old-new invitation, however sophisticatedly expressed, to just Lean Back and Enjoy. And certainly there are a few tempting visual offers. Delvaux's cameraman is once again the brilliant Ghislain Cloquet, making the most of gloomy landscapes, chiaroscuro interiors.

Let us examine, though, that 'basic simplicity' to which Mr Milne refers. Presumably a skeletonic précis might come down to this. Julien (Mathieu Carrière), a young pianist from Luxembourg, is working as music critic for a Parisian newspaper in 1917 when he receives a telegram from an old friend, Jacques (Roger Van Hool), now a pilot, inviting him to his small country house, La Fougeraie. Julien is aloofly welcomed by an anonymous beauty (Anna Karina), a monosyllabic presence who brings him tea, his favourite dinner, and late that night beckons him to her bed. Jacques fails to materialise, other than in several elusive flashbacks, together with a girl friend Odile (Bulle Ogier) who appears to have played a kind of Catherine to the men's Jules and Jim: the following morning, Julien dresses hastily and leaves for the station. There he borrows a paper from some soldiers, discovers Jacques's squadron has been grounded for several days, hangs irresolutely about as the train for Paris steams away and an iris-in fixes his hesitation for ever.

He is not the only one left hanging. For questions do pose themselves, after all, or why has M. Delvaux been to such trouble to strew an eye- and earful of clues around? Julien, as uprightly played by Carrière, is a young prig, his pacifism as likely as not ordinary cowardice (see his behaviour as the house trembles under a distant bombardment); memory-shots establish his inconsistent pride – he will play the piano in a cinema but not for a society gathering – and his virginal rejection of a possible come-hither from Odile; he is locked into himself to an almost catatonic degree. There are references one is duty-bound, if only in desperation, to pick up: those irises in and out, the mysterious Karina-hostess, may or may not have a connection with the handsome serials of Feuillade (we catch a snippet from *Fantômas* in that cinema); a breathtaking little overhead shot finds Julien watching a small girl playing hopscotch, her skirts swirling, in the courtyard below and singing a rhyme set to Brahms: 'le Paradis n'est pas pour toi . . . Le Paradis est pour le Roi', this before he entrains for la Fougeraie – and that strange mausoleum of a house has Burne-Jones's *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid* on the wall of the room where Julien dines. Are we to cast glacial young Julien as a slightly thawed king, therefore, after his mysterious night of love? What relation does the Karina-dummy bear to Jacques and is she, together with the special dinner, part of an enormously generous gift laid on by his old friend for Julien? One gathers things were marginally different in the short story by Julien Gracq from which Delvaux had drawn his hinting script, though no less teasing in the outcome. What one does wonder is whether there is not a category of fiction, dealing in ambiguities, which is not better left on the page: I know many found the filming of *Le Grand Meaulnes* completely satisfying; to me it was a gauzy betrayal of the whole spirit of Alain-Fournier's novel (which, incidentally, has its affinities, or vice versa, with the doomier questings of Delvaux's world).

Fred Haines's brave attempt to translate Herman Hesse's 1927 *Steppenwolf* to the screen – like Delvaux, he both scripted and directed this first feature – registers as even more misguided. One can only guess at his motives, but it is tempting – if ungracious – to detect some spill-over here from that Hesse the Hippie who swamped American campus life in the late-Fifties and Sixties in a wash of lugubrious solipsism and mind-blowing. Poor Hesse, presciently enough, was moved to add an author's warning anent this in 1961.

If nothing else, going to the movies has lately been adding to my literary education at a gallop (Thackeray, Ken Kesey), for which a modicum of gratitude is presumably in order. But it was in fear and trembling that I went along to see what Mr Haines had made out of *Steppenwolf*, on the face – and in the depths – of it a formidably intractable piece of prose. As its author shows every sign of recognising, it is heavily imbued with what one thinks of as a typically Teutonic angst (after all, it's their word). It also works on a modified sort of Chinese-box or distancing principle, with the prim young nephew of a lady who lets rooms discovering an MS left behind by a tormented, middle-aged lodger: this text forms the body of the book and further contains another document, a pamphlet or 'Treatise on the Steppenwolf', which the lodger, one Harry Haller, has had abruptly thrust into his hand during a nocturnal stroll. All these literary devices allow Hesse to indulge in a great deal of churning about in the *inner* life or workings of his hero. As that handy nephew writes in introducing Haller's records, 'He belongs to those whose fate it is to live the whole riddle of human destiny heightened to the pitch of a personal torture, a personal hell'. And we are meant to take many of Haller's later phantasmagoric adventures – his crucial meeting with the bewitching courtesan, Hermine, his entanglement with diabolic Pablo, his wanderings in the hundred rooms of the Magic Theatre – as, in all likelihood, neither more nor less than Haller's own metaphors or imaginings. It is a very erratic and unevenly paced work, occasionally turgid, but that is arguably the price the reader has to pay for some of its higher insights.

How do you trap page after page of introspection on celluloid? The short answer is, you don't. Mr Haines's film essentially picks up the story in mid-book and the result is not so much a purging tour endured by a mind at the end of its tether, culminating in the arduous learning of laughter as therapy, as the trippiest of psychedelic trips. Max von Sydow does his best, which is excellent, with this bemused new Haller but Dominique Sanda as Hermine and Pierre Clémenti as drug-dealing Pablo are frankly picturesque blanks. Miss Sanda, notably is unassisted by lines like, 'You are enough to geev a poor girl the weelies' and 'Gee, Harry, I've got to flee'. The technical effects (save for one animated sequence of virtue) are ugly and many of the sets threadbare, *expressionismus* at its most off-putting extreme. Those whose existence is bound by the cinema will no doubt already be accusing me of succumbing to the old fallacy of not treating the film as a thing in its own right. Alas, the argument signally fails to hold water here. You need to know what Hesse was after before you can make even vestigial sense of Haines.

Grace-note: that Disney dependable, Robert Stevenson, has turned one of his jollier professional tricks with *One of Our Dinosaurs Is Missing*. Amiably scripted from a David Forrest novel by the late writer-producer Bill Walsh, set in and around a Twenties London bright with period posters, it has a fierce perambulation of nannies at war with a band of unwily Chinese misled by Peter Ustinov, all gasps, cackles and cringing.

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Music

Bayan Northcott

Exchange Rates

La cenerentola *Covent Garden* and *Radio 3*
Idomeneo *Coliseum*
New works by Jonathan Harvey and Nicholas Maw *Radio 3*

Rossini took just 24 days to knock together his *Melodrama giocoso* version of the Cinderella story in 1817 and it was first performed at the Teatro Valle in Rome within a day of completion – doubtless before an audience which expressed its approval, hostility and indifference with a noisy immediacy that modern society reserves for sporting events. Perhaps some authenticity-struck producer may yet seek to revive even this aspect of primo ottocento opera by training audience claques and handing garlic round the gallery. But in the meantime, *La cenerentola* has become a classic, and the staging which the company of La Scala has just brought to Covent Garden probably bears no relation whatever to the original occasion save in its use of Alberto Zedda's meticulously restored edition of the score itself.

The accent last week seemed overwhelmingly on neatness and discipline. Insofar as this meant set changes without muffled thuds, stage groupings without tentative shufflings and playing from Claudio Abbado's ebullient little orchestra of a delicious brightness, the results were a respite indeed from our own wavering standards. It was also a pleasure to watch Paolo Montarsolo's gangling Don Magnifico, Cenerentola's stepfather, and to hear the spacious baritone of Claudio Desderi's Alidoro, the philosopher-tutor who substitutes for Perrault's fairy godmother, whilst the Cenerentola herself of Lucia Valentini Terrani ranged from the most touching mezza voce to a final coloratura firework display of staggering precision. Doubtless we shall be seeing more of her – but then we already do of Teresa Berganza, who was Cenerentola on the opening night, of Luigi Alva who sang the Prince, and of Abbado himself. Moreover Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's production, sets and costumes perpetuate much the same international style of puppet theatre prettiness of his *Don Pasquale* for Covent Garden three years ago. Maybe I was naïve to expect some special revelation of 'Italianness' from the Scala visit, but I found the implication that first-class opera productions everywhere are rapidly becoming indistinguishable rather disturbing.

The Coliseum revival of *Idomeneo*, on the other hand, could do with a little less 'Englishness' in the pejorative sense; the neo-classical aesthetic of the Enlightenment was, after all, just about the most self-consciously international in the history of the European arts. Alas, Motley's plain maroon columns, festooned with little bits of net to suggest sea-coast scenes, are now redolent of nothing so much as Old Vic productions back in the days of Austerity, whilst Glen Byam Shaw's laudable attempt at a suitably elevated production style of stage movement comes over as too demure by half. As for the verbal repetitions of the arias, translation makes them sound not only anti-dramatic, but silly. All of which is a pity, for Mozart's uniquely grand and elaborate score under Mackerras resounds through the Coliseum's wide spaces with a burnished splendour and is very decently sung. As Illia and Idamante, Lois McDonall and Ian Caley must now be accounted amongst the most accomplished of our younger Mozart singers, though he could sometimes afford to relax his vocal production a little more, she a little less. John Mitchinson sings out nobly as Idomeneo, and Rita Hunter spoils a powerful assumption of Electra only by slurring the staccato cacklings at the climax of her mad aria. The first London revival since 1970, this is not to be missed – best to approach it as essentially a concert performance though.

Two first performances of English works last week under the distinguished German conductor, Michael Gielen, suggested all sorts of critical antitheses – not least because both were structured on an antiphonal basis. In Jonathan Harvey's BBC commission, *Inner Light (3)*, the two sound sources are a massive symphony orchestra and a quadraphonic electronic tape and the basic expressive idea nothing less than 'the expansion of the consciousness towards God'. The opening minutes in which the orchestra gradually emerged out of indefinite taped sounds are certainly impressive; the tumultuous concluding tutti in which high and low sounds strained apart, finally vanishing beyond range of the human ear in a rush of numinous atmospherics was positively awesome. But the body of the single, half-hour movement seemed a good deal less certain in effect. No British composer in his mid-thirties has striven more ambitiously than Harvey to synthesise all the progressive developments in contemporary music, whether in Stockhausen, Boulez, or the American composer-theorist, Milton Babbitt; a residual diffuseness and anonymity are hardly surprising at this stage. Unfortunately, in *Inner Light (3)*, the result is specifically to hinder momentum; the tape and orchestra alternate and combine, but somehow they rarely thrust one another forward.

It is just this sense of powerful, sometimes unpredictable dialectic that so strongly characterises Nicholas Maw's *Life Studies* for 15 strings (arranged in two groups of seven with a mediating double bass). A 'work in progress' since 1973, this now comprises a book of eight pieces of which Nos 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 were selected for the first London performance at last Monday's BBC Round House concert, together with the first performance anywhere of No 2. Maw's stylistic sources are relatively traditional – Berg, Bartok, Britten – but his juxtaposition of the wildest textures is never less than acutely heard and at such moments as the densely iridescent violin chords which fan out in No 8 he transcends his influences altogether in a way, I feel, that Harvey has yet to do. The latest study variously weaves together flowing lines derived from a Chopin prelude to create a nocturnal atmosphere that is some thing of a throw-back to Maw's earlie music. Nonetheless it makes one all th more impatient for the several longer work he has now had on the stocks for son time but which never quite seem to achiev completion.

Records

Wilfrid Mellers

Outsiders

Bob Dylan: Desire; Songs of Redemptio *CBS 86003* £3.29
Joni Mitchell: The Hissing of Summe Lawns *Syla 8673* £3.25
Shusha: Before the Deluge *UAS 29879* £3.2

Unlike most pop artists Bob Dylan, grown up, has continued to grow. At a superficia hearing his new disc might be mistaken fo a regression to his earliest manner. No fewe than six of the numbers are narrative songs telling a tale in which the theme sometime seems to be overt protest. But the new song differ from the early ones in two relate ways. First, instead of being youthfully in volved in the stress of circumstance, Dyla is now standing outside it; secondly the relative richness of the music and it mode of presentation imbue the theme wit something of the quality of myth. In thi *Desire* resembles *John Wesley Hardin* Both present the raw rurality of the movi Western, which has given rudimentaril legendary form to so many of the impulse that have shaped American (and ou society: Edenic as against fallen man; th Outlaw as simultaneous hero and villai law against chaos; white goodies again black, red or yellow baddies, the categorie being nowadays reversible.

Dylan's songs are emotionally fraught b cause they accept these ambiguities. 'Hu ricane 'and 'Joey' are outlaw songs whic are songs of redemption as well as of pro test; what's redeemed is both the outla and us as, in more than one sense, captivate members of society. 'Hurricane' has a crud 'tumbling strain' for tune, which, invigorate by virtuosic percussion, becomes formidabl in reiteration. 'Joey' has a mysteriously ob sessive refrain and an evocative accordio style sonority that opens unexpected hor zons. Part of the paradox lies in the word combination of pathos with bathos, pa in the contrast between the grass-roots sim plicity of the musical materials and th sophistication of its presentation. Through out the album, indeed, the themes a theatrically projected by the atmospheri scoring (which includes two supporting mal voices), so that the songs become als a saga that is Dylan's, the Wild West's, an vicariously ours. Incidentally, this is the fir Dylan album to give credit to a secon creator. We're not told precisely what Jac ques Levy's contribution is, but if he wa brought in to help induce this theatrica aura, he's done so validly and valuably.

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Though the saga is self-consistent, the songs' modes and moods range wide. 'O Sister' adds to country-western idiom the fervour of early American hymnody as still practised by choirs such as the Sacred Harp Singers; there's an obbligato for folk fiddle, brilliantly bristling (like Dylan's voice) in distonation. In the tango-tainted Mexican number, 'Romance in Durango', the obbligato instrument is a nostalgically plangent mandolin; again there's an uneasy equivocation between poetry and doggerel in the words. This is still more evident in 'Another Cup of Coffee', in which Dylan's raucous caw becomes American-Hebraic-cum-Moorish-flamenco cantillation. The Jewish alienation theme is, of course, endemic in Dylan's songs, but this is the first time he's used Hebraic vocal techniques. One isn't sure whether it's wild or funny, and I suppose it's both – a medley of mysticism and corn.

One might say the same of the personal song of redemption with which the album ends. Though it's ostensibly a straight love-song addressed to Dylan's wife, the banality of the words sticks in the throat; similarly the contrast between the severe folk modality of the verse and the music-hall bleat of the refrain discomforts. I suspect it's meant to. The proof of the paradox is in performance; 'Sarah' is strangely moving in the hearing, lingeringly haunting in retrospect.

Girl solo singers in the folk-pop scene have tended to be more impressive than the men – with the outstanding exception of Dylan – perhaps because 'feminine intuition' accords readily with regression to Nature and with personal therapy. The finest of them is – or was – Joni Mitchell who in verses such as 'Marcie' or 'To a Seagull' proved a genuine (and genuinely feminine) minor poet; and who created for her verses memorably lyrical tunes, supported by guitar harmonies of a pristine tenderness. Not so long ago her songs had an autobiographical impetus that became, like Dylan's, relevant to us all. Of late, however, this personal authenticity has dissipated. The new disc provides evidence (as the title suggests) that Joni is still a poet; but the verses are prone to pretentiousness, ambiguous not (like Dylan's) because ambiguity is inherent in their meaning, but because they're emotionally fuddled.

Maybe that's why the lovely voice has dulled and the subtly contoured tunes have faded into an indeterminate mumble; certainly it's why the once expressive harmonies have been submerged in fashionable electronic gimmickry. The pleasantest number is 'In France They Kiss'; the best *music* on the disc is the piano jazz at the end of the only number not by Joni, Jimmy Hendrick's 'Centrepiece'. But I fear that is intended parodistically.

In total effect Dylan's disc is detached yet passionate: disinterested. Joni's disc sounds so cool as to amount to a cop-out: uninterested. I prefer Shusha's guileless songs, which justify their limitations of vocal and emotional range by pretty tunes. The arrangements, however, sound inappropriately elaborate; and remembering Shusha's first, exquisitely beautiful record of Persian love-songs and lullabies I suspect there's potential in her own numbers which she hasn't explored. She should be encouraged to do so.

In the Spring number of **OUT SHORTLY**

Universities Quarterly

CULTURE, EDUCATION & SOCIETY

MUTUALLY NECESSARY F. R. Leavis

'Dr Michael Tanner has struck me as having been very forbearing, and more than that, surprisingly generous. . . . I myself have known at close range two persons to whom I confidently imputed genius, and I judge that that word is not attachable to me. One of the two was Wittgenstein. And actually I haven't been so outrageously arrogant in my references to him as my prose style, together with the improvised mode of argument that went with it, allowed Tanner to suppose.'

FROM MODERN MASTERY TO DECADENCE Roger Poole

'. . . through the fabric of the Modern Masters, the *dominant note* is fear. There is fear of the theoretical as such, fear of abstraction, fear of ideas. There is implicit hostility to anything that doesn't fit neatly into the main tradition of Anglo-Saxon empiricism and positivism . . . this cavilling sophistical verbalism.'

THE TECHNOLOGICAL THREAT? Patrick Corbett

'How can we prevent the trivialization of humanistic work by its academic setting? . . . What is it *in practice* that we humanists have to give to this technological world? How *in practice* can we fit ourselves to do so? Anything less than that is verbiage.'

THE EDUCATION OF VICE-CHANCELLORS Maurice Peston

'Higher education is expensive. Administrators and teachers in universities and polytechnics are spoilt, and some of them are arrogant to boot. University professors and vice-chancellors are great criers of woe.'

FREUD AND ART Anthony Storr

'The idea that Freud's effect upon the world has depended as much upon his clarity, his stylistic excellence, and his aesthetic gift as upon the scientific validity of his theories would have been anathema to him.'

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENTIST Reuben Bitensky

'In his own mind the social scientist attributes his failure to the fact that the greater the social problem confronting him — the more variables involved — the more complex are the demands upon methodology. Honing methodologies become a modus vivendi, for there is nothing else left to do.'

'THOUGHTS IN THEIR DUMB CRADLES' Michael Black

'It is reductive to say that Baudelaire is a fetishist, with commonplace fantasies memorably expressed . . . his linguistic means put us back in touch with the native movements of the silent mind.'

THE REWARDS OF RESEARCH Richard Startup, Michael M. Gruneberg

'We simply do not know how far academics are intrinsically interested in undertaking research as against, say, their natural interest in being promoted. Are academics convinced that they are working in frontier territory, and are they satisfied with their ability to extend frontiers?'

PORNOGRAPHY AND VIOLENCE: MUCH ADO ABOUT SOMETHING E. J. Mishan

'Along an ever-expanding infinitely flexible multi-dimensional spectrum a place can be found for everything — including, of course, used toilet paper and filmed scenes of bestiality. Such a conception of art lends itself admirably to licentious impresarios and monomaniac authors and artists.'

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Culture, Education and Society

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Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Unsafeways

City Sugar *Comedy*
The Bells *Greenwich*

Herod simply disembowelled them: we slaughter our innocents more fastidiously, but not a lot less effectively. We deny them a decent education and then stick them in dead-end jobs, numbing their senses and poisoning their minds with phonic cyclamates – or so Stephen Poliakoff suggests in his eloquent, intelligent *City Sugar*. The scene is Leicester, which, as students of Mr Poliakoff's work will already know, is the world capital of plastic tomatoes, multi-level shopping centres and everything else that's soulless and drab. Up there in the radio station is Leonard Brazil, king of the local airwaves, and down there in the supermarket is Nicola Davies, one of his more compliant victims. Her employers have dressed her in a light-blue overall and dumped her on the shop floor, beside a neon-lighted deep-freeze, and just beneath a camera that tirelessly rakes the aisles for signs of larceny among the customers and slackness among the staff. Brazil's task is to keep her more or less content with her lot, by playing her the voices of the faces that people her fantasies and plaster her bedroom walls. We see the two of them in their respective habitats and then, at the play's climax, together in a sci-fi studio for what Brazil calls 'the competition of the century': which, as it turns out, means Nicola's ritual humiliation on AM and FM.

It's a play that could, of course, be dreadfully patronising: a young man's eyebrows superciliously raised at lives he himself is too cloistered and precious to comprehend. But it doesn't come across like that. Leonard Brazil may regard Nicola as the most average of all the average imbeciles he presumes to be listening to him: he may, and does, grab and shake her, feverishly sneering at 'that blank, infuriatingly vacant gaze of yours'. But I don't think Mr Poliakoff shares his contempt. After all, Nicola has just refused Leonard's invitation to win a session with a visiting pop-idol by dashing round the studio and screeching into the mike. She's at first bewildered, then inarticulately enraged by his persistent attempts to make a public fool of her; and the play leaves her fumbling out her own tiny, half-comical protest against the forces she vaguely feels to be oppressing her. She goes up to the freezer it's her job to guard, pulls out all the packets she can, and slings fish-fingers over the antiseptic supermarket floor. 'We could finish off the whole place,' suggests a fellow-assistant, eyeing the pyramids of tins and packets. 'Maybe next time,' replies Nicola, 'I'll see, next time.'

Lynne Miller, mulish and muted up to now, puts across these words with some savagery, as if to encapsulate the lesson Mr Poliakoff presumably wants to give any educationalist, town-planner or industrialist who may be in the stalls. People can't be canned with impunity: we frustrate and repress them at our peril. Even mousy Nicola has the makings of a Goth, or at least a vandal. It's a point worth taking and, on the whole, well taken; but I can't help thinking *City Sugar* has lost something en route from the little pub-theatre in Shepherds Bush where we first saw it last year. Mainly, it has lost John Shrapnel, a cocky, racy, cynical DJ, only minimally haunted by memories of his earlier career as a schoolteacher. Adam Faith, who replaces him, is earnest, puritanical, slow-talking, and at times seems hardly to have left the classroom. That is a possible interpretation, or would be if Mr Faith's Brazil gave the least impression of having been an interesting or gifted teacher. But the words plop half-dead from his mouth, stunned by the blunt instrument that passes for his tongue; and one can't imagine any kid hearing him with attention, whether his subject was Chinese geology or British rock. Candidly, Mr Faith is a bore: it says much for the play that it somehow survives his presence at its centre.

The Bells is the unremarkable melodrama immortalised, if only as a name, by Henry Irving, who played the guilt-ridden murderer with more than his usual bravura. 'He really did almost die,' said Ellen Terry of his last climax. 'His eyes would disappear upwards, his face go grey, his limbs cold.' Towards the end of his life his friends dissuaded him from doing the part, in case he *did* snuff it during a performance. Well, Freddie Jones throbs and grumbles in that maundering, moulting, last-gasp way of his, but leaves no such memory behind him – and why should he? His efforts, and those of most of the cast, are more prosaically directed towards avoiding excess, maintaining credibility, and precluding our laughter: aspirations that may not be worth achieving, but which they achieve anyway. Still, I was glad to see the old thunderer, even with the lightning extracted.

Television

Dennis Potter

Heavenly News

The madly speeded up chimes of an ice-cream van as it collides with a row of gravestones has always seemed to me to be an extremely fetching piece of surrealism with which to introduce the evening's news on television, so it was a relief to find that the signature tune had survived the changes which Andy Todd the demon burbler has forced upon the BBC's main bulletin. Some of the hand-outs led one to expect that a different style of presentation was a matter of such astonishing import that even so small an alteration as 'warmer colours' on the background set could change the usual dreary nature of the day's events. And sure enough, *Nine O'Clock News* on BBC-1 got off to a very zippy start in its nice new honey and urine shaded studio on Monday night. Obedient designers had changed the world, no less, and it was soon apparent that all over the revamped globe people were behaving even more abominably than usual as they strove to meet the requirements of the improved bulletin and the steadier diction of its solo newsreader. Everyone in the department must have hoped that events would conspire to give an extra snap of urgency to the new format, and they could not have been too disappointed with an opening sentence which announced that 'the pound fell today to its lowest point ever'.

Messing about with 'the news' is a healthy enough practice if it draws attention to the ways in which language, assumption, design and presentation inevitably act as a filter between the viewer and the facts or events which are being selected and reported. There was a time when the BBC News was read by a gentleman in a dinner jacket, but the area of complacency which semiologists italicise as *what-goes-without-saying* has been considerably reduced since then. The Corporation has gone from bow ties to earrings, a progression not yet advanced enough to label a junior doctor rather than a coal miner as an 'extremist', but it is certainly a journey that has taken us from one end of a suburban garden to another. Pastel colours and softer shapes in the studio represent degrees of change in the News which the eye can see: stock labels and phrases have to be picked up by the mind, and often it is only time itself which fully shows up the underlying assumption or deft political shorthand that helps to make the bulletins slip down so easily.

The grainy old cinema newsreels of *Film As Evidence* (BBC-2) provide many a ripe example of the grotesque slanting that must once have seemed to represent the 'common-sense' view which the slickly manipulative language of most types of popular journalism perpetually confuse with reality. This week the series reached Suez, where 'Nasser has made his grab, cheered on by the usual hysterical mob'. Movietone News showed Egyptians picking over the rubble of their homes in the aftermath of the Anglo-French invasion. 'Perhaps the older ones are thinking, this is the price of Nasser's folly,' boomed the familiar voice of the reasonable commentator. Television news bulletins have never degenerated to this kind of 'perhaps', nor to the explicit editorialising that can be caught in such a blatant sentence, but I do not think it is unduly paranoid to remain alert to the manner in which the very modes of 'impartiality' represent, almost necessarily, the tone and stance of a consensus view of politics and political language. There is still not too much doubt about what we are supposed to think.

Those with an evangelical cast of mind know where to look for what they call Good News and seem to draw a gloomy relish in contemplating the torments and tragedies which are now the staple fare of more secular bulletins. Malcolm Muggeridge insisted yet again on Sunday's *Under Bow Bells* (BBC-1) that a polluted Western civilisation was in its last death throes but the effect was rather spoilt by the way he clung to the sides of the huge pulpit at St Mary-le-Bow, making him look a bit like a frightened goblin trapped in an old oak

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coffin. Warnings so dire are not helped by unsympathetic sniggers from the audience, and a much more accommodating Christianity was bobbing about in another pulpit on the other channel. I switched to *Open Pulpit* (Yorkshire) just in time to hear Michael Heseltine using the uniquely incantatory words 'taxpayers' money' as he rolled the stone back over the tomb. Not since my chapel-going childhood have I felt quite so strongly the tingle of revulsion at the nape of the neck which signals the presence of sacrilege and blasphemy.

The Conservative spokesman for industry was not going to be intimidated by the lingering excesses of ancient piety, for it took the merest wag of his manicured finger in the pulpit of St Peter's, Shipley, to emphasise that we are an overtaxed community which needed to update 'love thy neighbour' into a more tenable system of what are known in his circles as 'incentives'. When the goggling vicar boldly interposed some trendy-left passages from the Sermon on the Mount calling upon a man to share what he has with those who have nothing Heseltine knitted his blond eyebrows in understandable bewilderment. Not for long, though. The Tory Manifesto came unto him like the dazzling light on the road to Damascus. There are other pieces in the Bible too, he spluttered. 'Why don't you say: to him that hath more will be given?' Some of the congregation actually broke into applause, maybe in startled recognition of a figure demonstrably giving an entirely new and much more ominous sense to the term Shadow Minister.

Weekend Competition

No 2403 Set by Martini Sam

An indispensable feature of all mass-circulation magazines – from *Playboy* to *Woman's Realm* – has always been the 'agony column', in which representative readers bare their representative hearts. Why, then, don't the up-market periodicals – from, say, *Plays and Players* to *Notes and Queries* – air their readers' spiritual, emotional and intellectual torments? Sample letters, please: 120 words, with a ceiling of 150 if replies are included; by 26 March.

Result of No 2400 Set by Tim Hopkins

Competitors were asked to define some thoroughly modern words in the style of Dr Johnson.

Report by Little Keith

This comp provided pretexts not for lexicographical fastidiousness so much as for reactionary rage – which was probably just as well. A nightmare to judge, too, because (*a*) nearly every entry had some virtue, and (*b*) no one perfectly reproduced the Doc's murderous slow lobs. Thanks and £1.50 for every definition printed.

Economist: An inhabitant of cloud-cuckoo land; one knowledgeable in an obsolete art; a harmless academic drudge whose theories and laws are but mere puffs of air in face of that anarchy of banditry, greed and corruption which holds sway in the pecuniary affairs of the real world.

Identikit: A kind of game or toy very popular with policemen, the principle of which is that a portrait of a suspected miscreant is published, very strange in aspect and not a likeness: this allows the miscreant a sporting chance of escape and makes detection a more challenging occupation.

In-depth: Shallow, but produced by a team of of hacks. TOM DONNELLY

Scottish National Party: A means by which a small number of Scotchmen get others to pay their fares to London.

Feasibility Study: Proof that something someone has already done is possible; a device used to delay a decision.

Royal Commission: The ultimate feasibility study (*q.v.*). J. TIMSON

Gimmick: An opprobrious term by which one charlatan condemns the stratagems that another charlatan has thought of first.

Consumer: A greenhorn, gull or coney – commonly a housewife.

Gay: Characterised by the inspissated spleen commonly detectable in prolonged sojourners in the tents of Sodom. MOLLY FITTON

Pedestrian: A poor fellow who walks in fear of his life.

Semi: A dwelling that will not stand up without support from another.

Squash: A cordial made by the dilution of artificial flavourings. ROBIN CHASE

Supermarket: A gigantic emporium displaying a vast range of packaged merchandise on open shelves; a temptation to theft by the dishonest and a challenge to thrift by the poor and needy. Generally esteemed one of the triumphs of modern civilisation.

Launderette: A club for the washing of dirty linen in public by means of an electrically activated series of revolutionary motions sequentially imparted and mechanically timed; while cleansing is being effected the owner can observe the revolving garments through a circular window, converse with his neighbours, or peruse the public prints. STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Ecologist: One whose preconceived notions of the desirability of preserving some arbitrary balance or relationship, approved by himself, between selected animals and the rest of creation, lead him to condemn automatically all further advance of man's control, utilisation and consumption of the resources of nature.

Environment: That aspect of the human condition and surroundings which deteriorates proportionately as it is improved upon or advanced. TOM BREWER

Conservationist: One who preserves wild species, which subsequently eat each other.

Tribune Group: A faction of Whiggish levellers. G. J. BLUNDELL

Comprehensivisation: An educational process dedicated to the proposition that the genius and the imbecile can proceed at an equal intellectual rate; a mode of ensuring that two or more good schools become one big bad one. RODDY REDDING

Sociology: The pretence of supporting, by empirical means, conclusions that either we knew beforehand or are certainly false.

Chairperson: One who presides at a meeting and who is either a woman and ashamed of it or a man and fearful of women. PETER ALEXANDER

Hopefully: An adverb used hopefully by the ignorant. C. VITA-FINZI

Assiac
Chess Board

No 1373 Death is so Permanent

A slogan frequently posted on US motorways, and who would doubt its relevance. In chess much the same applies to resigning, particularly when so 'permanent' a step could have been avoided, such as in Ligterink-Schmidt, 1975. /16/B7/5kpp/2K2b2/24.

Assuming that after 1) Kd3,Kg4; 2) Ke2,Kh3; 3) Kf1,Kh2 he could not reach the 'safe' corner White resigned, and in the subsequent post-mortem (which should really have been a post-pacem) his opponent explained how White could have drawn by activating the Bishop. **1) Kd4! and after . . . Kg4; 2) Be2†, Kh4; 3) Ke4,Bc7; 4) Kf5!!** (but not Kf3??,Kh3, 5) Kf2,Bb6†;) **,g4; 5) Kg6!,g3;)6 Bf3,** and, what with the K commuting between g6 and h6 Black can make no progress, even if his B tries to stop it by **. . . Bf4; 7) Kf5,Bd2; 8) Kg6,Bc1; 9) Bc6,Kg4; 10) Bd7†,Kf4; 11) Bh3,** etc.

I took this from one of Prof. Michel's witty ruminations in *Deutsche Schachzeitung* where, on the subject of Greek gifts he quotes an interesting brevity of his own (White against Baetz in a 1971 correspondence game).

1) e4,e5; 2) Ktc3,Ktf6; 3) f4,d5; 4) fe:,Kte4:; 5) d3,Ktc3:; 6) bc:,d4; 7) Ktf3,Ktc6; 8) Be2 The Prof wished to avoid the customary 8) cd:,Bb4†; etc, too simple for his taste, **Bc5; 9) c4?!,0-0; 10) 0-0, Be6;** and now, somewhat hastily, Michel played **11) Qe1** and got quite a shock by **. . . Bc4:,** a Greek gift if ever there was one. Or was it? After some thought White found a clever way of exploiting Black's weakness on the Black squares due to the KB having to stick to his post on the c5-g-1 diagonal; **12) Bg5!,Qd7; 13) Bf6!!,gf:** Relatively the least of evils; **14 ef:,Kh8; 15) Ktg5,Rg8; 16) Qh4,Rg5:; 17) Qg5:,Rg8; 18) Qc5:,Bd5; 19) Bf3,** resigns.

Finally (Kupreitchik-Tamme, 1975) a hilarious King-hunt.

1) e4,c6; 2) d4,d5; 3) Ktc3,de:; 4) Kte4:,Ktd7; 5) Bc4 Ktgf6; 6) Ktg5,e6; 7) Qe2,Ktb6; 8) Bd3,c5 He should have played . . . h6 first; **9) dc:,Bc5:; 10) Kt1f3,Qc7** He still should have chased that Knight; **11) Kte5,0-0; 12) Bf4,Bb4†; 13) Kf1!,Ktbd5; 14) Bg3,Bd6; 15) c4!,Ktb4; 16) Ktg4!** Doing away with his Black Majesty's last protector, **Rd8** Obviously, to take the Kt would be suicidal; **17) Ktf6:†,gf:; 18) Kth7:,Ktd3; 19) Ktf6:†,Kg7; 20) Kg4†!** Wisely sacrificing another piece to start the King-hunt, **Kf8:; 21) Bh4†,Ke5; 22) Qg7†,Ke4; 23) f3†,Ke3; 24) Re1†** He could have speeded up the execution by one move, playing Bf2† instead, **Kte1:; 25) Qc3†, Ktd3; 26) Bf2†,Kf4; 27) Qf6††.**

In memory of my old friend Fritz Sämisch who died recently the 4-pointer is the famous position with all White pieces *en prise* and yet brilliantly decided by one spectacular move. For 6 ladder-points **B** is a win nicely (and quite easily) achieved in five moves. **C** (for 7) also takes five, a statelmate neatly enforced. Usual prizes, entries by 22 March.

A: Sämisch-Grünfeld 1929: /3q1rk1/p1p4p/5PKt1/2pP1kt2/2P4Q/P3R3/8/6K1/.

B: E. Hufendiek 1975: /8/2Kt5/3p4/kP1K4/6B1/7p/1P1p4/8/.

C: Rinck: /3Kt4/8/3k1P2/16/2p2p1p/7P/7K/.

Report on No 1370 *Set 20 February*

A: 27) . . . Kte4:??; 28) Rg7:!,Kg7:; 29) Bh6:†, resigns.

B: 1) Kf7,b2; 2) Bh6†,gh:; 3) Bd3,cd:; 4) Ktf8!, followed by perpetual.

C: 1) h7,Be5; 2) Kta7!,Bh8; 3) Bd4!,Ktf6; 4) Ktc6 (thre ††), **Kth7:; 5) Bh8:** followed by **Bb2†** and **Ktb4††.**

Prizes: E. Allan, D. E. Cohen, D. Graham, P. Hodgson, A. J. Sobey.

Report on No 1361 *Set 19 December*

A: 1) Bc4!!,f5; 2) ef:,Qf5:; 3) Be6:, and **. . . Qe6:** fails against 4) Rd7: & 5) Qf6†. Nor, obviously, would 1) . . . Bc4: or . . . Kg6 or . . . Kg7 be any good.

B: 1) Bh4†,Kc7:; 2) Bg3,gh:=Q†; 3) Kh1:,Kd6; 4) Kg2,d3 5) Kf1!,Qg3: stalemate.

C: 1) Rb7†(g7?),Ka3; 2) g7,Rg1; 3) Rc7:,Kb4!; 4) Kh4,Rg5!; 5) Re7!,Kc5; 6) Re5††!, etc.

Almost everybody noted B1.P. at e5 in **A.** Prizes: G. Abrahams, P. Hodgson, C. J. McSheehy, J. T. Naylor, C. Sansom.

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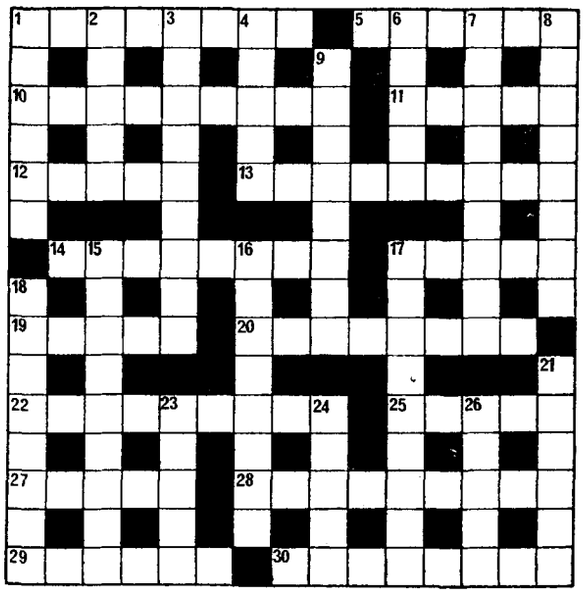


ACROSS

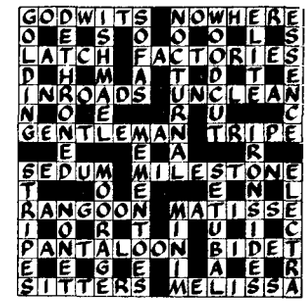
1. Having visions makes a disturbed mind rage (8).
5. Place for duck and apple pie (6).
10. Message of peace given in unknown quantity in country with a religious image (9).
11. Jester who backs his master and starts laughing (5).
12. Without a relative the title would turn to dust (5).
13. Club account for bird (9).
14. Friar who uses a china cup (8).
17. Concerning what appears in an American enterprise (5).
19. Think of love and waste away (5).
20. Linguists whose unusual bias is in non-scientific subjects (8).
22. Potentially hotter in bed for those about to wed (9).
25. Was ill if she turned back (5).
27. A riot may have got out of proportion (5).
28. If the healer abandoned his solemn commitment, it would be a setback for literary men (9).
29. Surrenders crops (6).
30. Disciplines a man carrying a gun (8).

DOWN

1. Reach the end carrying letters for a French destination (6).
2. 'He —— whate'er he can' (Longfellow) (5).
3. If they lost in one, the small would become fully developed (9).
4. Cuts but is caught, held by cover running up (5).
6. Left port with a cargo (5).
7. The thrifty shed a quiet tear about a poet (9).
8. Material which could give one a chill too (8).
9. Complaint found in the south above all (8).
15. Tries a lot when translating into Greek (9).
16. Man, it's a dicey business where planes are! (8).
17. When bitter tears are seen, sweets appear (4, 5).
18. 'The waveless plain of —' (Shelley) (8).
21. The tragedy of ways round love (6).
23. Shape of empty nothingness? (5).
24. Foreign wife (5).
26. Permission to depart (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1153



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OXON/BERKS/HANTS borders. Fun loving prof. active, sociable, sep. lady. Main ints countryside, sports, travel, hopes to meet similar gent. 45-55. Box 3359.

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NEW STATESMAN
Vol. 91 No. 2347

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Theatres

CITIZENS' THEATRE, Gorbals, Glasgow, presents Citizens' Theatre Company in 'Woyzeck' by Büchner. 041-429 0022.

EMBASSY THEATRE, Swiss Cottage. 'All My Sons' tonight at 7.30 p.m. 'A Penny for a Song' 17, 18, 19 March at 7.30 p.m. Box Office open Mon.-Fri. 2-6 p.m. Tel. 722 8186.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE 722 9301 Rehearsed play-reading 'Black Dog,' by Alan Drury with John Hurt, dir. Fred Proud. 8 p.m. Tickets 40p. Ends 13 March: 'You'll Never be Michelangelo,' by Roger Milner. Final perfs Fri 8 p.m. & Sat 5 & 8 p.m.

IPSWICH THEATRE. 0473-53725. 10-27 March, 'Hamlet', with Giles Block, Hazel Douglas, Richard Mayes. Sponsored by Northgate Schools Foundation.

NEW END. 435 4116 (Hampstead Tube). 'Wild Orchids' by Frank White, 8 p.m. Ends Sunday, 14 March.

ROYAL COURT 730 1745 Prev. 15 March at 8 p.m. Opens 16 Mar. at 7 p.m., Subs 8, Sats 5 & 8.30 p.m. 'Parcel Post,' by Jemi Azibadi.

THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR. 95 61107. 'Murder with Love', a new thriller by Francis Durbridge.

VANBRUGH THEATRE CLUB. From 18 March London première of Dale Wasserman's American hit 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest'. Details: RADA, 62 Gower St, WC1. 636 7076.

Exhibitions

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TATE GALLERY, Millbank, SW1. Constable. Until 25 April. Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat. 10-6. Tues., Thurs. 10-8. Sun. 11.30-6. Adm. 50p. Season Ticket £1.20. Schoolchildren, students, pensioners, half price.

Arts and Crafts by elderly patients of St. Pancras Hospital with help of volunteers. Shaw Theatre, 100 Euston Road, NW1, 8 March—8 April 9.30-8 p.m. Monday to Saturday. Admission free.

Poetry

NATIONAL POETRY CENTRE, 21 Earl's Court Sq., SW5. 12 March at 7.30 p.m. B. Catling and Michael Haslam read from their own works. (There will also be an exhibition of B. Catling's Art Work). 19 March, 7.30 p.m. Tony Jackson and Jim Burns.

Entertainments

ADRIAN HENRI & MARTYN RAPHAEL host a 5-day, self-catered, course in Poetry & Music in Beaford, a small N. Devon village, 5-9 April, £17 inclusive. Write for details to M. Raphael, Beaford Centre, Beaford, Winkleigh, N. Devon before 25 March.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Planning ahead

These are difficult times for firms operating in Britain. The country's economic situation is serious. Many firms have had to close and unemployment figures are reaching new peaks. Press reports cast gloom and despondency. A Department of Industry survey has suggested that investment in manufacturing and in the distribution and service industry will fall again this year. Things look bleak indeed.

If you are in business and occupying offices in London, consider for a moment your situation when there is an upturn in the economy. That same Department of Industry survey predicts improvements by 1977, with "a large increase" in manufacturing investment. But 1977 is next year! Will your firm be ready to cope with the changed situation? It doesn't give you much time to prepare. Could you expand in your present accommodation? Can you afford to go on paying rents and rates as high as those in London?

So what can you do? Make a point of visiting the 'Northampton comes to Town' exhibition at The London Press Centre, Shoe Lane (off Fleet Street). Northampton is coming to town to provide you with information about the substantial economies that can result if you move your office to Northampton. Firms moving from Central London can save up to *80% of their rent and rates, so it's* worth thinking about moving the bulk of your activities even if you keep a small headquarters office in the capital.

Now is the time to consider your firm's future. A nationwide survey in January 3 edition of 'Estates Gazette' on *The Office Market 1975* showed that development activity had come to an almost complete standstill; it would not be long before there was a nationwide shortage of new office space and rentals would start to move up rapidly. This gives fair warning that firms should, if they are wise, plan for the future now.

There are other gains to be made by moving your office to Northampton, a town which is expanding by the mid 1980's from its present population of 150 000 to 240 000. Your staff would be free from the cost and strain of daily commuting. Private homes cost less and there is a wide range of rented homes available from the Development Corporation. A special staff recruitment system, available only in new and expanding towns, operates in addition to the normal avenues of recruitment. Although Northampton is designated a new town, it is also a town with a long history. It has well established social services, education and entertainment facilities and many acres of beautiful parkland. The old and the new together. Northampton has good communications; right next to the M1 motorway, it is little more than an hour from London by road or rail.

The town is rapidly developing as a centre for offices with sites for 3 million square feet of new offices in the town centre alone. Several new prestige offices are immediately available, in the town centre, and all are capable of subdivision. They include Greyfriars House, an office of 200 000 sq. ft. on three floors above the new bus station; Belgrave House, 88 000 sq. ft. forming part of the new Grosvenor Centre; Riverside House, a block of 58 500 sq. ft. within a hundred yards of the River Nene; and Scottish Life House where 19 500 sq. ft. remain available for letting. Northampton can also offer sites for which no office development permits are required, in the town centre, at the new district shopping centre and in one of the attractive new employment areas on the outskirts of the town.

If we've stirred your interest, why not come along and see for yourself the opportunities that Northampton can offer. Come and discuss your particular circumstances, even if you're not contemplating an immediate move. There is no admission charge and you don't need a ticket. See you there?

'Northampton comes to Town' from Tuesday 16 to Friday 19 March, at The London Press Centre, Shoe Lane, London EC4. (Exhibition entrance in New Street Square). Shoe Lane is a link between Fleet Street and Holborn Viaduct (nearest underground stations Chancery Lane and Blackfriars).

Times of opening:
09.30 to *18.00* Tuesday to Thursday
09.30 to *15.00* Friday.

Meetings

AFRICA CENTRE: 'Christianity through the eyes of African Writers'. Talk by Lewis Nkosi, S. African writer and critic. Tues. 16 March 6.30 p.m. Adm. 40p, studs 25p. 'The political economy of famine and drought'. Talk by Mejid Hussein, International African Institute. 1-2 p.m. Adm. 30p. 'Angola in Struggle': New film, made in Autumn 1975 6.30 p.m. Wed. 17 March. Adm. 50p, studs 30p. 38 King Street, WC2. 836 1973.

H. G. WELLS: A REAPPRAISAL. Weekend Conference, Dartmouth House, 9-10 Oct. 1976. Details from H. G. Wells Society, 24 Wellin Lane, Edwaiton, Nottingham.

YOUNG MAPAM 'To be an Arab in Israel' Fouzi El Asmar, Palestinian author and Israeli Citizen, will give an account of his experiences as one of Israel's Arab citizens. He is the author of the book 'To be an Arab in Israel', and has suffered jail for his political activites. Venue is 37 Broadhurst Gdns, NW6. (Nearest tube, Finchley Road), 8 p.m., Sun. 14 March. All welcome.

15 MARCH 6.30 p.m. Focus Group, Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue, WC2. Debate on the motion 'This House believes that State Socialism is Compatible with Democracy'. Opposed by the Canadian National Student Debating Federation. No admission.

'MORE DEMANDING THAN PRISON', Felim O'Leary, Director of the Barbican Centre, Gloucester, 7 p.m. Thurs. 18 Mar at NISW, 5-7 Tavistock Place, WC1 Howard League meeting. Non-mems. 25p

'THE DANGERS AND EVILS of Truth' Cyril Barrett. Sun. 14 March 11 a.m Sunday Forum Sun. 14 March 3 p.m 'Health, Ethics and Social Responsibility' Dr Stark Murray. Tuesday Discussion on theme 'Grounds for Hope' Tues. 16 March 7 p.m. 'Possibilities in Communication' Peter Hunot. South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Sq, London WC1. 01-242 8032.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 13 March, 3 p.m 'Open Day'. Tues. 16 March, 6.30 p.m 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 17 March, 6.30 p.m. Public Lecture 'Answers to Questions Asked by Non-Buddhists', Roy Brabant-Smith. All welcome. Send s.a.e for full programme.

THEOSOPHY. Public Talk & Questions Sun. 15 March. 8 p.m. Free. 'Karma Simply Stated'. S.a.e. for programme, book list & literature. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Courses

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SOUTHERN SPAIN. House by beach sleeps 4. £25 p.w. 01-254 1702.

WEEK IN POLAND. Places available in small WEA group visiting Warsaw & Cracow, 9-16 April. £105 for flight, hotels etc. Details: Henry Davis, 01-340 4371.

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